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MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHT A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOUL A SILENT ROOM.

THE POETRY REVIEW

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THE MATTHEW ARNOLD CENTENARY

MATTHEW ARNOLD, eldest son of Thomas Arnold, D.D., and Mary Penrose. Born December 24th, 1822.
Education: Winchester, 1836; Rugby, 1837; Balliol, 1841.
Inspector of Schools, 1851.
Married Frances Wightman, 1851.
Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1857; D.C.L., 1870; Civil List Pension, 1883.
Died April 15th, 1888.
"Weep bitterly over the dead as he is worthy, and then comfort thyself; drive heaviness away; thou shalt not do him any good but hurt thyself." (Eccles. xxxviii.).
(This quotation was the passage for the day—April 15th—from Arnold's Note-book.)

* * *

Much has been written and spoken of Matthew Arnold lately, and the great point that seems to emerge from it all is that he lives now far more in his Poetry than in his Prose. That wonderful little masterpiece of delicate irony, political wisdom and high patriotism, *Friendship's Garland*, has lost little of its edge even at the end of the half century that included the Great War; certain pages of the *Essays in Criticism* are among the immortal things in our literature; while the special tendencies of his prose writings have been adopted by hundreds of other writers, and are now part of the intellectual currency of the time. On all these sides honour and gratitude are meted out to him. The things, however, which draw so many visitors to the simple graveside in Laleham churchyard are surely the *Obermann* stanzas, the *Bethnal Green* and *Shakespeare* sonnets, *Heine's Grave*, *Thyrsis*, *The Scholar Gipsy*, *The Church of Brou*, *Tristram and Iseult*, the lovely *Switzerland* poems, *The Forsaken Merman*, and so many more beautiful and unforgettable pieces. It is for these one stands bareheaded by that grave and muses upon its words:

> There is sprung up a light for the righteous and joyful gladness for such as are true of heart.

The righteousness and truth of heart of Matthew Arnold shine nowhere so clearly as in his poems.

During his lifetime Tennyson overshadowed him. That was inevitable. That immensely impressive personality overshadowed everybody. Even Mr. Gladstone at the height of his fame and influence seemed a person of no account whatsoever on a certain famous yachting cruise, for the simple reason that Tennyson also happened to be a member of the party. Indeed, I remember that Gladstone himself admitted as much in a speech: "When we politicians and all our works and names are utterly forgotten the name and writings of Tennyson will still be inspiring the people." I have heard people say that it was a thousand pities Matthew Arnold should have allowed the ascendancy of the author of *In Memoriam* to discourage him from the writing of verse. I don't think he did. I think his official duties were the main cause of his long silences as a poet, and that the small public response to his appeal was another. But, however that may be, the indifference of the Victorians has been brilliantly atoned for. We all read Matthew Arnold now.

I was for some time a member of a small society in London which met once a month for an address and discussion. My fellow-members were lawyers, doctors, stockbrokers, bankers and so forth, and I was the only person in the little group who would have had to fill up a blank left for the definition of his profession with the words "Man of Letters." Yet on an evening when, with a good deal of inward fear, I gave them an address on the Marguerite story, I found, in the discussion that followed, that they nearly all knew the poems well, and not only knew them but understood and loved them, and had pocket editions of them, and could quote verse after verse correctly from memory. That evening was a most valuable one for the lecturer. It brought him a stride or two nearer to that just sense of life's "values" which is so tremendously desirable and so very seldom attained.

I have never gone to Switzerland without the charming little Macmillan *Selected Poems* in my pocket. On the

Lake of Lucerne I listened one summer day to a voice, now silent in death, as it read *Saint Brandan* and *The Neckan*, while the great mountain masses provided their wondrous moving picture. Only last November, walking along the Lauterbrunnen valley, line after line from him came into mind:

> The Jungfrau snows look faint and far.
>
> Where the white mists for ever
> Are spread and upfurl'd
> In the stir of the forces
> Whence issued the world.
>
> The ice-cumber'd gorges,
> The vast seas of snow.

and so many more! And of the thousands of English travellers who now visit Berne in the course of a year, how many as they have sat on its famous terrace with the organ pealing in the minster behind, and the incomparable panorama of the peaks of the Oberland glorifying the horizon before, have found an added charm for the scene in their memory of the beautiful poem which Matthew Arnold named after that noble platform!

The moment does not seem to me one for criticism. It is one rather for gratitude and humbleness and a man's solemn thoughts for the land and nation Matthew Arnold so chastened but so served and endowed and loved. The hundred years that have passed away since the day of Matthew Arnold's birth have left England still one of the mighty Powers of the world, the British Empire far greater than even he ever knew, and the British people quickened into new avenues of thought, ideal, and conduct. Are we still listening to him? Many most certainly are, men and women, and lofty is the voice they are hearing:

> Still doth the soul from its lone fastness high
> Upon our life a ruling influence send;
> And when it fails, fight as we will, we die,
> And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.

H. M. WALBROOK.

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E. F. SEYMOUR.

THE APPRECIATION OF POETRY

THE appreciation of Poetry is perhaps more widely spread than we imagine. It really implies, in its broadest sense, appreciation of life. We make a great mistake if we narrow down its meaning to appreciation of written poetry only. Those who recognise poetry in its particular form are comparatively rare. But there is an essential poetry which runs through everything which all can feel in a greater or less degree, and which it would be pedantic to confine to one particular form of expression.

I think that a great deal of the contempt and suspicion which undoubtedly exist in the minds of most people against poets and poetry arises from the belief that poets have marked off a certain side of life as their own special preserve, and adopt on that account a superior attitude to the rest of mankind, and this belief has been fostered very largely by the poets themselves. But poetry, like religion, has never been the property of one particular sect. The priest need not necessarily possess more religious feeling than many of the worshippers. He makes religion articulate—that is all. And it is the same with poetry. Poetry is, after all, life—life intensified in every direction. During those rare moments when we are truly alive we are then, whether we know it or not, living poetry. The essence of those moments can be gathered up and preserved in written words, and their value as poems will be in proportion to the emotional perception of the poet. But we can never go as deep as life. Our attempts at expression can reflect little more than the evanescent, lovely surface of things. The personal bias, the prejudices, the timidities of the poet get in the way and block the channel through which the clear stream of life would otherwise flow unimpeded. There is no one finely organised or sensitive enough to reproduce life in all its forms, but what we should remember is that poetry is first of all a thing of life and not of books, and that when we are living fully we are often nearer a true understanding

of poetry than those who only recognise poetry after it has materialised into words.

Poetry does not exist alone in a few poetical properties—in roses and dawns and falling leaves. It exists wherever life has full and uninterrupted expression. A poet should be able to perceive not only the beauty of a rose but also the beauty of a perfectly made plum-pudding! Poetry is a very excellent test of most things. Where poetry cannot be found something is very likely to be wrong. We are too apt to shut away the important things of life into water-tight compartments, whereas they are, rightly considered, all part of the same thing. Poetry, Religion, Ordinary Life—why are we so concerned lest they should meet each other? They would agree together better than we imagine. Where poetry is not, life is crippled, cramped and degraded. The human, which is also the divine, element is lacking. It is the difference between almshouses and workhouses, country inns and cosmopolitan hotels, machinery and human beings. Instances could be multiplied for ever, but one great truth remains quite simply this: that life at its fullest and most human, life, in fact, as it was meant to be, *is* invariably poetry—and what an endless variety of form and expression does not this imply!—but where it is dehumanised and deformed, then indeed life is nothing more than a sort of garbled prose.

This test can be applied to everything, great or small, and I do not see how it can ever fail. There is a phrase which has always impressed me, and which I think amply sums up the whole matter: "Is it accepted of song?" Anything that you can make a song about—that is to say, if you *can* truly make a song—is in some profound sense sure to be right.

But of course there *is* a region of conscious art where appreciation is more specialised and of a different kind. In this region particular faculties are needed, and it may be said that the power of appreciating written poetry is almost as rare as the power of writing it. Fifty people imagine they care for poetry for one who truly does. They like certain forms of verse because of the morality or lack of

morality expressed—or for a dozen other personal reasons. It is rare to meet anyone who has the instinct for recognising poetry wherever met with, and not the poetry only of some particular sect or school. The truth is that we all, in art as in all else, find only what we bring to it ourselves. It is by no means enough that a thing should be beautiful: the man who sees must possess in himself the sense of that particular form of beauty or the beauty will escape him altogether. It is a mistake to think that beauty has only to show itself to be appreciated. There is a beauty which walks surrounded by so great a light that the beholders are blinded and see nothing. Where the emotional range of art is greater than the emotional range of the beholder there art will appear meaningless. Great beauty passes for the most part unseen, whereas the banal, the pretty, the trivial, and the pleasing are everywhere acclaimed.

So much criticism of poetry, of people, and of life in general is not criticism at all, but merely a more elaborate way of saying " I do " or " I do not like " such and such a thing. People are apt to forget that their dislikes often reflect on themselves. Had they greater powers of understanding and discrimination, they would be less ready to condemn. It is quite true that in poetry, as in all else, one man's meat is another man's poison, but in that case the simplest and safest method is to leave the other man's meat alone—not to throw it at the cook's head because it does not temperamentally agree with one. Of course true criticism—which springs from perfect and not only partial understanding—is always legitimate, though, perhaps, in the end the artist is helped in his work more by the understanding than the criticism. But the true critic is born, not made, and must possess humour, a sense of proportion, and those kindred gifts which I do not believe the most perfectly applied Coué system could ever give us. The well-known attitude, " I know nothing about music, but I know what I like," is quite permissible provided we admit that our lack of appreciation—unless based on definite grounds—may arise quite possibly from a deficiency in ourselves.

But I am sure, as I said before, that our appreciation of poetry, apart from personal tastes and idiosyncrasies, is very largely dependent on our appreciation of life, and that the keener sense we have of life in all its subtleties and variations, the more likely are we to understand poetry. For poetry is life—life, poetry—the two are interchangeable.

MARGARET SACKVILLE.

THE HEAVENLY DAISY FIELDS

AT morn I roam in Khairpur-fields ;
But salty ground no flowers yields !
No buttercups, my glances meet ;
Not e'en a little daisy sweet.—
At eve I gaze from earth to skies,
Up there a field of flowers lies.
My fancies lend ethereal wings ;
And swiftly from sinister things,
I fly to meads of brighter show
Where million milky-daises grow.
With ankles deep in blossom-snow,
I gather daises, star on star ;
My treasures wax ; but near and far
New haunts of shining myriads are.
To be a queen and slave combined
Of flowers crowns and chains I wind ;
And still remembering earthly ways,
I play with silvery petal-rays ;—
" He loves me," as in childhood days ;
" He loves me not " . . . " He loves me " . . . yea !
He made this pearly path for me—
From towers of Eternity
Thro' dreams, I hear the hours chime.
I wait ! . . . He'll come . . . 'Tis not yet time !
He'll not forget the field of tryst,
I caught his glance through longings' mist,
He'll come arrayed in daisy-beams.
To kiss my soul awake, from dreams.

Khairpur Mirs, November 15th. ELSA KAZI.

HOLIDAY

BREATHE only tender words to-day,
Believe your secret dreams have scope
Where morning burns the hills away
Above the tree-clad slope.

Make kindliness your urgent prayer,
For little things are kind, and these
Unnumbered fill the shining air
With hospitalities.

Let all your thoughts be butterflies
Leaping and twirling out of sight.
The holy mirrors of your eyes
A playground for delight.

Borrow the sun's calm energy,
And from wide fields of brightness win
The sheaves of pale serenity
That evening gathers in.

CYRIL G. TAYLOR.

CHANCTONBURY RING, SOUTH DOWNS

HERE fold on fold the hills as billows sweep
Towards the purple West; anon they heed
The urgent call of men's affairs that need
A passage to the sea; the ramparts steep
Now yield to let the high-way pass, then leap
As if with gathered strength and gath'ring speed
To Chanctonbury, fane of Druids' creed,
Then rest, and o'er the Weald their vigil keep.
Dear landmark! and stern outpost of the Downs
Which shield the plains from else encroaching sea;
Landward thy slopes smile through their forestry,
Stripped as for war the frontier seaward frowns.
Thy realm scarce notes the roar of Ocean's quest,
Nor heeds his scouts, the mists that wreathe thy crest.

EDWARD G. EVANS.

NETTLE

THE nettle is not vivid and sweet
With buds impulsive, like the briar ;
Its leaf shines not, and in its veins
It keeps no quick memorial fire.

The daisy has more enchanted life
In lusty swarm that climbs the hills ;
The buttercup has drunk the sun,
And woods are glad of daffodils.

So it was for these other flowers
So manifestly lovely and strong ;
And never for the nettle, I
Fashioned my tributary song.

But when song failed, and humbled me
I have turned wistful for relief,
And envied the passionless content
In the nettle's undistinguished leaf.

STANLEY SNAITH.

THE OLD YEAR PASSES

THE Old Year in a shrouded garment dressed
Lay with his face towards the darkening west
Waiting for dreamless rest.
He was so old the music of the Hours
Fell on deaf ears ; he could not see the flowers
They laid upon his breast.
He could not feel the hand of Time that pressed
His pallid finger-tips so gently lest
The touch should give him pain.
Only his lips moved, and the watchers heard,
Mid his confused whispers, the one word—
Murmured again and again—
" Forgive "—As if he sought to pay a toll
For his spent life, like some frail human soul
That yet has striven his best.

HILDA HART.

WALTER DE LA MARE: MAGICIAN

"Loyalties we do not recognise, and dare not disregard; beauties which deny communion with our beautiful, and yet compel our souls."—J. Middleton Murry.

THE "loyalties" of Rupert Brooke or Mr. Drinkwater —"new-peeled sticks," "moon-washed apples," "little desires"—are unforgettable, but not irresistible, because understandable. The "loyalties" of Mr. de la Mare are of the same order as those about which the above passage was written: they are like the "toneless ditties" of Keats; we sense their charm, but to define or describe or explain them would be impossible.

The subtle form of æsthetic consciousness which gave them being is not possessed by Mr. de la Mare alone. A few of our modern writers have it, but only to a very few is given the power of expressing it. It is a power which the modern world is dimly realising; and the craving for it has been the partial cause of those strange and fantastic excesses which are sometimes termed "the disease of modern life." The extravagances of Futurism; Impressionist Art and all its horrors; the almost morbid interest in Spiritualism; Psycho-Analysis, are all in some measure the outcome of a half-realised desire to express the inexpressible. Some of the cults have done harm, some good; but none of them has attained its real object.

The genius of Mr. de la Mare does for us what these crude and clumsy ultra-modernisms have failed to do. It lifts a corner of the Veil, and allows us to glance—but only, as it were, through twilight—into a new land of haunting mystery and delight. The spirit which pervades this poetry is akin to that Breath which moves the Spirit of Pity in Hardy's *Dynasts*. Words cannot express its infinite sympathy, refinement, and penetration, its artistic restraint, clarity of vision, and delicacy of touch. The poet so subtly weaves his web of words, tones and thoughts, that the whole suggests, faintly but insistently, the presence of "loyalties" not perceived by the senses or the spirit or the mind, but outside, and greater than, all these. It is tenebrous, not so much as an essence, more elusive than

a faint scent, this spirit which Mr. de la Mare has imprisoned in even the slightest of his poems. Half understood, only, by those who have it, with a nameless, negative charm for the many who cannot understand it at all, this quality forbids analysis. The secret of its indefinite fascination is hidden —or lost. . . .

—No, not lost, for it has worked secretly, seedlike, for many generations, very deep in the soil from which Poetry springs. Occasionally it has put forth a tender shoot: occasionally the shoot has grown up shyly, unnoticed, in some sheltered spot: more frequently it has withered away, nipped by the frost of contempt or misunderstanding. It is only now beginning to spring up sturdily, in the sudden warmth of sympathy and appreciation diffused by minds which have learnt wisdom through suffering—(For has not the War, and all it stands for, been largely responsible for the fine outflowering of poetry since its close?)—and is giving promise of the good fruit we hope it will bear in years to come.

Rupert Brooke caught this spirit when he said:

> Beyond this shifting cold twilight,
> Further than laughter goes, further than tears, further than dreaming.

—but though in this and other poems he catches and perpetuates something unquestionably lovely, his beauties are not so subtly suggestive as those "which deny communion with our beautiful, and yet compel our souls." After Mr. de la Mare they seem a shade too obvious, too sensuous, too tangible.

. . . One is tempted to think, How hopeless, in the face of these new indefinable qualities, is the task of the critic! He cannot interpret, for here is perfect interpretation, through sympathy, a rarer medium than language. He cannot amplify, for here, within its own limits, is soul-satisfying perfection. He must not disregard, for he is confronted with a beauty so strange and secret that he is at a loss to know wherein its loveliness lies. The poetry is in itself entire, yet it lays a burden of intellectual co-operation upon the reader in which the critic, as critic, can have

no share. Judgment—condemnation or appreciation—even where possible, seems impertinent.

As in not a few other cases, all that the reviewer can say appears unnecessary, pointless, futile—a mere cumbrous load of words supporting something so ethereally light and exquisitely balanced that it can rely on itself. To attempt to judge the artistry of Mr. de la Mare is like writing a treatise on a spider's web or a drop of dew. We may try to reveal the secrets of their structure, but to do so we may have to break the one to fragments; and the minutest observation cannot expose more of the other's beauty to us than we discern already. No amount of praise or blame of their separate qualities can brighten the dewdrop in our eyes, or coarsen the web. And so the nature-lover resents the treatise, and the reader the criticism, as pretentious and unnecessary.

II.

It is said that the spiritual attitude of a nation can best be determined from its poetry. Would, then, that there were many more writers like de la Mare! But he is not typical of English poetry as a whole, nor of any one particular school. The large group of semi-mystical lyric poets whom one associates with him—Wilfrid Owen, W. W. Gibson, W. J. Turner, Ralph Hodgson, even W. H. Davies, are among them—are all, somehow, on a different—I even dare to say lower,—level of achievement. To my mind de la Mare is infinitely superior, as a poet, to his contemporaries. His range is very limited; but he achieves all he sets out to do—and there are not many modern writers of whom one can say that. He is æsthetically perfect, unostentatiously original. He recalls Maeterlinck, approaches Blake, gives hints of Keats, yet is not in the least like any of these. His attitude is a mixture of alertness and tranquillity; he is always on the watch, sensing out the little, vague, unconsidered "atmospheric beauties" which other poets pass by; yet he is calm and restful, with the serenity which comes from deep insight and a great love of his fellow-men.

He is the poet of Childhood—its irrational terrors and

joys; the Lover of Little Things—a greater Lover than Rupert Brooke; the magician who metamorphoses everyday life, and shows the mystery in reality, and the strange and soothing intimacies in the unknown. He is at once quaint and wistful and whimsical. A past master of the will-o'-the-wisp art of negative statement, he conveys descriptions subtly by the *reflection* and *suggestion* of cool light and sound and colour—by the *intuition* rather than the direct perception of movement and emotion. His intense susceptibility to vivid or vague impressions, his sensitiveness to touch and sound, his consciousness of unseen presences, are expressed in finely wrought lyrics, whose apparent simplicity is not really simplicity at all, and which denote the presence of real intellectual stamina. They appeal to the wise, wide-eyed, mystical spirit of Eternal Childhood which lurks forever in the higher nature of every one of us.

Though the omission of quotations is usually deemed an unpardonable sin in an appreciation, I have purposely refrained from giving a single illustration from the work of Mr. de la Mare. Extracts, however carefully chosen, cannot do him justice. M. HUNTER WOODS.

HAWAIIAN MUSIC

ACROSS the beach the ukuleles sound
Their tremulous sweet whinings, and all eyes
Are on the lissom, comely boy who lies
Lazily on the sand, then at a bound
Is up and dancing, smiling all around.
The high-pitched Polynesian voices rise
In hulas that befit the jewelled skies,
Whilst Naihe's shapely feet caress the ground.
What if those cadences give me a glance
Of long-past lives of mine and revellings?
Did *I* once dance that rhythmic, sensuous dance
To such intoxicating, throbbing strings?
I know not; yet how strange that it should chance
That dance and song seem old, familiar things!

F. A. CARTER.

THE COTTAGE BY THE AQUEDUCT

THE cottage lay amid the Brendon Hills.
The ground was always muddy, save perhaps
In a long drought of Summer, or in frost,
Because a wooden aqueduct that leaked
Spanned the rough lane ; and sheep and cattle passing
Before the cottage trod the track to mire.
The cottage walls were damp, the rooms were dark
Being shadowed on the one side by a bank
That flanked the lane ; on another, by a hill.

Here lived a soldier with his wife and children.
I call him soldier, though he served no longer
At soldiering. His leg was troublesome—
One of those wounds that never really heal.
He might be strong for many months together,
And then his wound deprived him of all strength.
He was employed upon the neighbouring farm,
Milked cows and carted dung and cleaned out sties
And washed the cider-barrels. In those days
A labourer was paid a meagre wage
And dwelt in a cottage that the farmer owned,
And if he lost his work he lost his house.
The soldier's wife was most industrious.
She " kept the home together "—so they said.
The eldest daughter was away at service.
The eldest son had left the village school
And worked at farming. His baptismal name
Was Albert, but they always called him Jim.
It was a habit of the place to call
A man or boy by any name you chose
Or chanced to use. One Ernest was called Joe.
I asked the reason for it, and was told
That he " looked like a Joe," though why a " Joe " . . .
Well, there I leave it. Albert was called Jim.

Below him in the gradual of age

Came Bessie and three more. Bessie and Jim
Were good friends. They made little jokes together,
And Bessie sang. One song was called " The Farmer."
It told a bitter tale of cruelty,
How that a wanton farmer beat a lad
With a girt knotty stick and hurt his back,
So that he went a cripple all his days.
But Bessie heeded not its bitterness.

Her mother said one day, " Why do you sing
A song like that ? "
She stared and said, " Why not ?
The tune's a pretty tune."
" The words are bad."
" They're only silly words."
" The words are true,"
The soldier murmured, almost to himself.
His wife glanced quickly towards him. He sat there
Sucking a pipe and frowning, for his leg
Was giving trouble. " *Now* they wouldn't be,"
She said. " The song's of old ill days gone by."
" These days are better ? "
" Master's a good man.
He'd never strike a lad across the back.
I wish you wouldn't sing that song again.
I wish you'd never sung it."
" Leave the maid
Alone," the soldier said. " She's innocent."

The next day he was taken in a " float "
To the nearest hospital, five miles away.
Bessie and Jim assisted him to mount.
The soldier said, " You'll do your best, Jim lad."
Jim stared at him, as Bessie stared when told
The song she sang was not a fitting song,
Then said, " Now, father, don't catch cold," and laughed
And tucked the rug in. And the soldier said
" You'll do your best while I'm away, Jim lad,"
And drove off, and they waved their hands to him.

The weeks went by. 'Twas Christmas time, and still
The soldier had not come back to his work.
His wife walked over to the hospital.
He said, " I'm having quite a longish turn.
How's Jim ? "
" Oh, he and Bessie carry on
Their items just the same."
" Yes. How is he ? "
" How long d'you think they'll keep you here ? "
" Some time."
" The master's asking."
" Why's he asking that ? "
" He says he wants the cottage for a man.
If you should not . . . ."
The soldier scowled and swore.
" You've been away so many times, he says."
" I thought you said he was a good kind man . . .
How's Jim ? "
" He's working all he can."
" How is he ? "
" I don't know as he's worse than when you went."
" What do you mean by ' worse ' ? "
" Well, he looks pale.
But, there, he always did look pale."
" Did he ? "
" Yes, ain't you noticed ? "
" Not to speak of it.
I've thought about our Jim since I bin here.
He's not like me nor yet like you, is Jim.
He's more like—well, that window in the church,
Him with the doctors . . . in the midst. That's Jim."
" He's happy."
" Always was. I mind one day
I went up in the barton. He was singing.
I said to him, ' You'm happy, seemingly.'
He said, ' I'm happy as the birds in th' air.' "

She nodded without smiling, and then said
" I must be going now."

The weeks went by.
I saw Jim often. He was growing fast.
One cannot be too careful of a youth
Of fifteen who is growing very fast.
He talked with me about the work he did.
He rose at four o'clock and toiled all day.
He did not make complaint.
A neighbour said
" Jim does a man's work."
" What is he paid now ? "
" A boy's wage."
" But they have the cottage free."
" His mother's always making up for that—
And more, I tell her. Who'd live in that place ?
The walls are streamin' water all the time."
" Jim never grumbles."
" Oh, no, Jim's a man.
He looks a boy, if you can understand me,
He has a man's mind, and he works like one."
" He hasn't a man's strength."

Jim hurt his foot.
His mother bandaged it, and he kept on.
The soldier was to come home very soon.
Jim said, " I'll rest my foot when he comes home."
But on the very day that he was due
To leave the hospital Jim ceased to work.
He did the milking, and the farmer said
" You're feeling sick, Jim ? Have a cup o' tea."
" I couldn't drink it, master."
" Come along !
A cup o' tea and bit of bread and butter
Ud do you good."
" I couldn't eat it, master."

His mother went to seek him afterwards,
And found him in an outhouse, lying there
Unconscious. When the nurse who served the district
Was summoned, she said Jim must go at once

To hospital. They sent him in the float.
No other vehicle was available.
The soldier got a lift in a farmer's cart,
And came another way, and missed his son.

I saw Jim once again. His mother sat
Beside his bed. She had sat there all night.
Jim looked abroad with bright unseeing eyes,
And with one hand he plucked the counterpane.
" You know who this is, Jim ? " his mother said.
He did not seem to heed her words at all.
I smiled and said, " Hallo, Jim, you know me ? "
He raised his hand, and as I bent to him
He clasped my head and drew me down and kissed me.
That was good-bye.
The farmer said to me,
(This was in Easter Week) " They say that I . . .
They speak against me on account of Jim.
I tell you, I was very fond of Jim."
" Yes, so was I."
I saw the soldier, too.
He had returned to work, was washing barrels
With water through a hose-pipe. When he spoke
He held the hose-pipe, and the water ran
About his boots. He did not heed the water.
I told him of the farmer's vain regret.
He did not answer. Then he raised his head
And looked towards the sky and said quite low,
" I think our Jim is wanted where he is."
" He saved the home."
" Oh, yes, he saved the home."
" And you are fit to work."
" Yes, I am fit."
" He fell sick that same day."
" I've thought of that.
But what I mean to say is something more—
Jim died, and he was happy in his death,
Because he died . . . well, you know why he died."

ALLEN BROCKINGTON.

TOMBE DES ANGLAIS

SLEEP, in this forest plot,
Unknown for ever.
Though France forgetteth not
Your last endeavour,
Your own shall find the spot
Never, ah, never!

Sun on the forest wide,
But not for your seeing,
Nor how down each green ride
Red deer go fleeing.
Bright youth, a martyr, died,
France, in thy freeing.

Boyhood's scarce conscious breath
Cheerfully given—
None to record each death,
How each had striven—
Greater love no man hath
This side of Heaven.

HAGAR PAUL.

Some of our unknown warriors lie in one large grave in the forest between Soissons and Villers-Cotterêts, at a crossroads called Rond de la Reine. This grave, which is known as "Tombe des Anglais," is beautifully tended by a French family of Villers-Cotterêts, and is railed round to keep the deer from trampling it.

THE MARKET, FLORENCE

GOLDEN rain* and roses, acacia pink and white,
Dainty mauve wisteria, packed together tight,
Purple flags of Florence, carnations claret-red;
Never painter's palette with such a glory spread!
Funny fat old women, a-plaiting busily
Piles of hats and bonnets from straw of Tuscany;
Swarthy townsmen crying their pans of chestnut-cake—
Market-day in Florence, what memories you wake!

MARGARET S. DANGERFIELD.

* Pioge d'oro—laburnum.

MR. A. E. HOUSMAN'S RETURN

OF all types of poets the lyrist is least expected to be gifted with a wide range, whether thematic or intellectual: let him but sing, and what else matters? No one, for instance, blames Herrick for not possessing either the variety of Shakespeare or the depth and height of Milton. In considering the dramatic or epic poet the critic must look for many more qualities than in considering the lyric poet; it is therefore easier to assess—perhaps, also, because easier to assimilate quickly—the work that is but song, song, song. The same reasons, it may be presumed, are behind the greater appeal of the lyrist to the poetry-reading public. The writer of an epic or of a poetic drama requires more sustained attention, to say nothing of a more comprehensive knowledge of poetic equipment and technique. But to understand or appreciate a lyric needs no essential previous knowledge of poetic form, still less of philosophic terms and eternal arguments. It is just a question of momentary feeling and nothing more, and, if the feelings are fired, then the lyric has done its work and, like good wine, needs no bush.

It is easy, then, to understand why Mr. Housman's lyrics have so great a popularity, combining, as they do, the appeal that properly belongs to their *genre* and the appeal that belongs individually to their power of firing the feelings. Also, in the particular case of *Last Poems* (Grant Richards, Ltd., 5s. net) there is added the intriguing fact of the poet's long silence after an initial great success—a silence, in the circumstances, surely unique. It is debatable whether the publisher would be selling so many copies of this book if it were its author's sixth or seventh volume.

Last Poems is a book of the same character as *A Shropshire Lad*; that is to say, it treats of similar themes in a similar

manner, and it can be said at once ungrudgingly that the manner has suffered, in the interval, no diminution in felicity. The book, as also its single predecessor, has its limitations, but limitations in lyrical work—which was the thesis of my opening paragraph—do not necessarily form a damning fault. If they did, Heine, Burns, Lovelace, even Catullus himself, were damned beyond salvation as lyrists, a contention only perversely to be proven.

So much for limitations in theme. But when it comes to limitations in form, can the same be said ? He would be a rash critic who attempted to convict Heine or Catullus of poverty in metrical invention. But the case of Mr. Housman is not as theirs ; the charge can be brought home to him of writing in very few metres and stanza-forms. Taking *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems* as one book—which virtually they are—this becomes especially noticeable and entails a certain effect of monotony to the ear. Singly each poem is fresh ; in bulk, they become—metrically that is to say—after a time, stale. But the same could be said, and with no definite disparagement, of a musical programme devoted entirely to the works of Chopin.

Chopin, however, is Chopin, and Mr. Housman is Mr. Housman, and to point out what is *not* in a book is an unjust method of approaching what *is* in it. A book which contains such perfect lyrics as " The night is freezing fast," " Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries," " Tell me not here, it needs not saying," and " Fancy's Knell," is one upon which the critic, more especially if he happens to be a poet himself, can expatiate appreciatively—and enviously. Such moments of inspiration come rarely to any lyrist ; they seem to have come—happily for us, happily, too, for posterity—to Mr. Housman less grudgingly than to so many.

It is not necessary to give a taste of his quality to any abundant extent ; his work is already too well appreciated to need being served in minute portions in the form of appetizers, but the following stanza from " Tell me not here, it needs not saying " (No. XL), is such that I cannot

refrain from endeavouring to share my own personal delight in it with as many others as possible :

On acres of the seeded grasses
The changing burnish heaves ;
Or marshalled under moons of harvest
Stand still all night the sheaves ;
Or beeches strip in storms for winter
And stain the wind with leaves.

This has, it seems to me, that royal magic which is so rare and, when achieved, is so delicate a possession. This is a book to buy and not borrow, a book to buy again if the copy is lost.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

KYNANCE

Cassiterides, a legendary name for the Scilly Islands (Tin Islands), also for those islands in the Bay of Vigo in Spain, the situation of which the old Phœnicians kept in great secrecy, just as the Spaniards in the days of Queen Bess tried to keep their American gold-producing countries secret, and would have done had not the Englishmen of that day (the bravest and most adventurous that ever lived) found them out.

SOUTHWARD in the heart of Cornwall
Lies a gem of opal green,
Home of cormorant and petrel,
Kynance, Cornwall's sea-girt Queen !

Rooted deep the sea-pink clusters
Round the rocks of serpentine,
And the heather intermingles
With the gorse and celandine !

Wondrous caves and mighty headlands,
Open out in sands of gold,
Witnesses of bygone ages
Where Phœnicians came of old.

And the Ancient Britons gathered
On this wind-swept rocky coast,
Whilst the storm clouds raced together
Like a valiant warrior host.

Bartering tin and ruddy copper
With those merchants stern and wise
Who had come from ancient Tyre
And from far Cassiterides !

Kynance ! gem of the Atlantic
Set in seas of opal green
Nestling under towering Lizard
Kynance ! Cornwall's sea-girt Queen.

EVELYN MICHELL.

BLOSSOM

KNOW you the Kentish borders,
With Sussex close behind ?
In the busy town I sit—
And dream—and call to mind
Mile after mile of Orchard
In the full tide of Spring,
Sweet with a thousand perfumes,
And white with blossoming.

From Ham-Street into Appledore—
And on—again—and on—
Where like a fairy-isle, snow-girt,
Lies shy Kenardington ;
Up the hill to Wittersham—
And turn again, and then—
By the toll-gate at Small Hythe
That leads to Tenterden.

Through aisles of trembling blossom—
Neath the blue arch of sky—
By winding lanes to Peasmarsh—
And back again to Rye ;
Out on the Romney marshes—
For company the sheep.
Might I wander in my dreams
I could not choose but sleep. . . .

M. E. MASON.

ALICE MEYNELL

I

SHE has gone forth—" The lady of my delight "
As some free bird, that passes out of sight—
Leaving her voice of singing on the height.

Her legacy is ours in trust to keep—
Her flock of thoughts—as soft and white as sheep—
Our grief for tears too proud—for words too deep.

M. E. MASON.

II

On the evening of November 27th we were met everywhere during a journey across London with the contents bill of an evening newspaper that proclaimed " Famous English Poetess Dead," yet we did not overhear a single comment or inquiry. The evening paper had a truer sense of the proportion of things than its myriad customers—it recognised the passing of a great personality, even if its public was unmoved thereby, and paid a greater tribute to a notable event than did *The Times*, which failed to produce a leaderette on the most significant item in the day's news. Many less important people, even murderers, have been shown greater consideration than the leading lady in the land, who should have been Poet Laureate and whose influence was and remains a bright light in a gloomy world. We have heard her poems spoken with the reticence and quiet feeling that were a part of the poet's character from Brighton to Newcastle by men and women, girls and boys, with whom they had become a part of their lives : we know from experience, too, that the most exquisite essays contained in the twin volumes, *The Rhythm of Life* and *The Colour of Life*, have by their delicacy and penetration, deepened the literary appreciation and strengthened the character of many to whom English literature is a priceless possession and who are passing on to others what they have gained from Mrs. Meynell. Lord Rosebery wrote of Sir Frank Lockwood, " His sunny humour brightened many lives," which in York Minster distinguishes for ever the character of a great Yorkshireman : of Mrs. Meynell it may be said that her grace and refinement and the strength of

her fragility fortified and beautified many lives, more indirectly than directly. Unlike many literary folk, her work was akin to her personality. She was surrounded with a selfless sanctity and an ineffable charm that could not be dissipated and needed no active assertion. She was sympathetic to young writers who had the least claim to her notice, and whose crudity would have taxed a less sensitive and subtle literary critic, and she was impervious to the petty jealousies and malicious meannesses that accompany and degrade the literary coterie. An artist in words, animated by an austerely passionate and penetrating spirit, with a perfect balance of subject and treatment, Mrs. Meynell is a model for all young verse writers tempted to indulge in careless language and loose ideas.

III

Tall dewy spikes of mauve-gray lavender,
To delicate fragrance vowed,
Within our earthly gardens breathe of her—
Soul-cloistered in a crowd.

Even so, within our thoughts her thought holds place—
Inviolate, apart;
Yet yields to love a sweet intangible grace
That lingers in the heart.

MURIEL E. GRAHAM.

* * * *

At the moment of going to press we receive the following letter from Messrs. Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.: "We think your readers may be interested to know that a definitive edition of the late Mrs. Meynell's Poetical work is in preparation and will be published during January next, under the title of *Collected Poems*. In addition to the Poems already published, the volume will contain a good deal of later work which has not yet appeared in book form. The hitherto uncollected work will also be published separately as *The Last Poems of Alice Meynell*. The price of the former volume will be 6s., and that of the latter 3s. 6d."

FLECKER'S "HASSAN"*

A LITTLE flock of sheep in scribes' clothing, led by the bell-wether, has surged over the grave of James Elroy Flecker, found the grass sweet, nibbled and passed on. Perhaps after all it is well, for neglect breeds neglect, and the rankling grass is a symbol of failure and oblivion for eternity.

Yet there is no fear of oblivion under the long grass for this golden traveller. For the sheep with their multitudinous raucous cries have proclaimed the good tidings of their discovery. And straightway thousands have thronged to the bazaars and come away laden with "his carpets of Bokhara, and his great sealed boxes bursting with unbeaten gold, and his beads of amethyst and his bracelets of sapphire." All the inexhaustible untarnished trappings of the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid are theirs for six pieces of silver net. And more—for these are but the *décor* of dead empires, the jewelled harness of lust long cold and power gone weltering down the night of impotence. For this little sum they have bought Haroun himself, and Jafer the Barmecide, and Hassan, who trips in comedy and stumbles out tragedy, and the sad, immortal spendthrifts of a night and a day—doomed choosers between love and doom or life shorn by the scimitar from life—Rafi and Parvanne.

The story opens with no hint of anything save Arabian Night adventure. The sacred figure of the Shadow of God on earth, "the Holy, the Just, the High-born, the Omnipotent, the Gardener of the Vale of Islam, the Lion of the Imperial Forests, the Rider on the Spotless Horse, the Cypress on the Golden Hill," dangles ridiculously in a basket against a blank wall. Suddenly wide adventure contracts into tragedy and the red downward slope of tragedy between brazen walls. Swift and swifter the action speeds, steeper and steeper the descent, narrow and

* *Hassan, a Play in Five Acts.* By James Elroy Flecker. Heinemann. 6s. net.

narrower the glowing walls, till, on the black brink of Grand Guignol darkness lets fall her veil, and music half intercepts the unendurable agony of love that endureth all things to the end. The light moonlight of old intrigue, the blazing moonlight and dreadful noon of passion in the toils of torment, the stealthy lengthening shadows of nameless things, the bloody sunset—this is *Hassan*, the drama of Bagdad.

And if any, setting down the book, are drawn, after the manner of the sons—and daughters—of Adam, to peer behind the scenes and ask the unprofitable question, " Who was James Elroy Flecker ? " I should answer them in the words of Flecker : " One who wrote ' with the single intention of creating beauty.' It is not for you or me to burrow into the profundity of his imagination and extract therefrom copy-book headings on " Flecker, his motives, aims and ideals." By the standard of beauty for itself he elected to be judged, and by that standard he must survive or perish from the generations to come. I am here to measure him with no measure of my own, but simply to lay these red roses of Bagdad where the hoof-marks have dented the trampled turf.

To the last he was true to the principle he laid down : " That art embraces all life and all humanity, and sees in the temporary and fleeting doctrines of conservative and revolutionary only the human grandeur that inspired them." One may ask no more of him, " What of the Golden Journey to Samarcand ? " Only those who follow the last scene of *Hassan* with more than their eyes may wonder concerning two pilgrims stealing away from the haunted city once again in blazing moonlight. How pale and shaken to their souls these two, under the revealing moon, fleeing from the bloody consummation of that impeccable artist Haroun Al Raschid and the fountain turned to blood. And in the form and voice of one, Ishak the poet, they may discern something half familiar, baffling, eluding them, yet almost within their grasp :

I am leaving this city of slaves, this Bagdad of fornication. I have broken my lute and will write no more quasidahs in praise of

the generosity of kings. I will try the barren road, and listen for the voice of the emptiness of earth.

Is this indeed Ishak speaking, or another ?

II.

Justice and recognition have come more slowly to Flecker the dramatist than to Flecker the poet. A notice on the wrapper of *Hassan* informs us that it will be produced "shortly," and warns all and sundry that the dramatic rights are strictly reserved. Let us hope that the feet of Mr. Basil Dean, that have tarried for two—or is it three ?—years upon the way, are growing warmer. He need fear no infringement of dramatic copyright on the part of bagmen from Israel or America who monopolise our theatres. They will not seek to rob him of this jewel. How should they know—how can they tell the difference between the Arabian night of Hassan and the Arabian nightey of Oscar Asche ! He need only fear, perhaps too well, his final critic, the little milliner who sits up aloft and slops her little heart upon the stalls.

Yet what does it matter to you, my dear, if now or a thousand years hence will see your Hassan come to mimic life in stageland ? There is no dead art and no dead artist since the first singers and seers of the Aryan world attained immortality and became the Rishis of to-day. Ishak has but taken Hassan for a little while on the Golden Journey to Samarcand. In a moment—for what is a thousand years but this ?—they will return with peace on their souls and the blessing of Allah and His mercy. Eyes that have mirrored the fountain of eternal dawn will no longer film to the red fountain of Bagdad. For, to those that have attained, those that have endured for the sake of the vision of Samarcand, pilgrims to the Mecca beyond Mecca, who have passed the desert of illusion and mirage and won between the portals of reality, no wounds will ever bleed again—nothing hurts since nothing matters.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

LEIGH HUNT AND THE NILE SONNETS

LAST year, and again the year before, as we have kept the centenaries of the deaths of two great poets, our thoughts have surely sometimes turned to the dear mutual friend of both—Leigh Hunt. Eleven years older than the one, and eight years older than the other, destined, moreover, for nearly forty years of life after both his brother poets had been laid to rest, we yet know him less, know less of his writings to-day, than either of the others.

More than one of Keats' sonnets was directed to him; and to him Shelley dedicated his tragedy—*The Cenci*.

> He of the rose, the violet, the Spring,
> The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake:
> And lo! whose steadfastness would never take
> A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering,

is a description any might well envy; while the lines "written on the day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left prison," are no less beautiful in their appreciation of the spirit which has "been as free as the skysearching lark, and as elate."

Well did Keats know that "stone walls" could make no prison for this great soul:

> In Spenser's halls he strayed, and bowers fair,
> Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew
> With daring Milton through the fields of air.
> To regions of his own his genius true
> Took happy flight. . . .

There is the poet as Keats knew him. Here is the man in Shelley's words:

> Had I known a more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent, and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense

of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew: and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

What could be more happy?

That is Leigh Hunt—poet and friend; yet he is fading to-day from the minds of all but a chosen few. We do not know him as we ought. Is there, then, anything lacking in his poetry, that it cannot stand the test of time at the side of his contemporaries?

Let us try and judge of this by taking those three sonnets to the *River Nile*—one by each of the three poets—and written, it would appear, wholly impromptu, when the friends were spending the evening together. Is there anything to suggest a more lasting quality in one than in the others?

They are alike in that they all draw simultaneously a picture of the ancient river of ancient Egypt—the "Land of Memory," calling to mind all its surroundings—"caves, pillars, pyramids"—conjuring up, with marvellous ease and rapidity, all that it is and stands for in the history of the world. They all do this; they all, also, give us inserted a very characteristic "moral." In general form, finish, and strength, it would be difficult to say which is best—which worst.

Leigh Hunt's is, perhaps, the happiest picture of the past: Keats' reference is but scanty, and Shelley's more imaginative than materially descriptive. Hunt's sonnet (1818) opens:

> It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
> Like some grave, mighty thought threading a dream,
> And times and things, as in that vision, seem
> Keeping along it their eternal stands—
> Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
> That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme
> Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,
> The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.

The whole atmosphere of ancient Egypt breathes through the lines!

Next we have the desert :

> Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,
> As of a world left empty of its throng,
> And the void weighs on us, and then we wake,
> And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
> 'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take
> Our own calm journey on for human sake.

Even as he did, through the deserts of doubt and emptiness, " In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture "—again to quote Shelley.

Yet all three sonnets are different : that first gives us a glimpse—more than a glimpse—of the river and all connected with it : Shelley's keeps more closely to the main subject :

> Month after month the gathered rains descend
> Drenching yon secret Aethiopian dells,
> And from the desert's icegirt pinnacles
> Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend
> On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.
> Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells
> By Nile's aerial urn, with rapid spells
> Urging those waters to their mighty end.

This is the river itself, and it remains foremost, save for the last two lines :

> O'er Egypt's land of Memory floods are level
> And they are thine, O Nile—and well thou knowest
> That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
> And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.
> Beware, O man—for knowledge must to thee,
> Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

Here we have one of the finest similes ever written : strong, convincing, " Shelleyan " to the last degree.

Keats had by far the most generous conception of the

river, imparting to his sonnet a tender pleasantness very remote from Shelley's thoughts of " blasts of evil."

> Son of the old Moon-mountains African !
> Stream of the Pyramid and Crocodile !
> We call thee fruitful, and that very while
> A desert fills our seeing's inward span :
> Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
> Art thou so fruitful ? or dost thou beguile
> Those men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,
> Rest them a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan ?
> O may dark fancies err ! They surely do ;
> 'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
> Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew
> Green rushed like our rivers, and dost taste
> The pleasant sunrise. Green isles hast thou too,
> And to the sea as happily dost haste.

The momentary doubts fade swiftly : a universal goodness would seem this poet's creed. It is the creed of youth : Keats' youth—and at twenty-three he was far younger than Shelley at that age—is, indeed, obvious in the sonnet, giving to it a freshness which is lacking in the lines of the elder men, writing as they did with an experience behind them not always kind.

There is no weakness in Keats' sonnet, save, perhaps, in the opening lines : there is much happy feeling—pen-painting of the truest, and this, in common with Leigh Hunt's, leaves us with a pleasant, restful feeling of peace.

Yes, Leigh Hunt deserves a better place than he is given in these days. To Shelley we willingly concede first place —he has a strength and a purpose beyond the pure beauty which is the predominant note in his friends' poems—but Hunt must rank for ever beside " our Adonais."

That the long neglect is being repaired is indicated by the publication, this autumn, of Mr. H. S. Milford's handsome edition of the poetical works—a notable and timely addition to the famous Oxford Poets and a more complete edition than has hitherto been attempted. (Cloth, 832 pp., 7s. net.) Moreover, a life of Hunt is to follow. The vigorous political satirist and poet provides ample material

for the bookmaker, but we are certain that Mr. Milford's edition of his poetry will remain his best literary monument —almost too thorough for present day uses. Excepting R. Brimley Johnson's excellent volume of selections, published by Dent thirty years ago, no adequate collection of Hunt's poetical works has been published since immediately after his death in 1859, an honoured veteran of letters, in receipt of a Civil List pension, far removed from his stormy years of revolt and his fierce literary and political enmities and friendships. Recent bookmakers have been content to represent Hunt by eight or nine poems, including always *The Nile* and *Abou Ben Adhem.* Mr. Milford's generous volume rebukes contemporary timidity. As early as 1832 Hunt selected himself in preparing a new edition of his poems, for, as he sagely remarked, " I do not believe that other generations will take the trouble to rake for jewels in much nobler dust than mine. Posterity is too rich and idle." We trust, however, that posterity is not now too poor and preoccupied to appreciate this latest and best edition of Hunt, which appropriately rounds off the centenary years of his early friends.

E. S. HAINES.

SOME IRISH AND OTHER POETIC PLAYS

PERHAPS the difficulty of filling the casts is the reason why the plays of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, are not more often performed over here in London and in the provinces. The Irish School is an original and non-imitative school, and if its literature were more widely known the actor-manager might be made to see that " what the public wants " is not always piffle or harassing realism. The success of Rutland Boughton's and Fiona Macleod's musical drama, *The Immortal Hour* (when every night there are appreciative listeners in the gallery who would otherwise be spending the evening in the public

house) proves that the purity and beauty of true art, of poetic drama, has a strong appeal to the uneducated as well as to the cultured classes. Several publications of the work of Irish writers have reached us during the past weeks, among which are two volumes by W. B. Yeats, the leading spirit of the Irish movement, his *Later Poems* and *Plays in Prose and Verse* (Macmillan), which do not include his two best known plays or the *Four Plays for Dancers*. Those possessing the collection of Synge's plays (published about three years ago) will welcome this edition of Yeats to add to the "Irish" corner of their libraries, especially as he has appended some interesting notes, showing alterations he made to his work, and giving information about the staging and lighting, and how certain of Gordon Craig's ideas had been made use of in the productions. In working out some of his plays Yeats seems to have shown indecision which is hardly indicative of powerful inspiration, and a structure cannot rise steadily unless it is built with a view in mind all the time of the ultimate climax. Another book of reprints, *The Image and Other Plays*, by Lady Gregory (Putnam) has come in lately, and in reading this spirited dialogue we begin to question whether folk-ideas and beliefs should be tabooed and dubbed as superstition when it is evident that they have a quickening influence, spiritually. For the contemplation of the supernatural lifts the mind, however ignorant, above the concrete and the prosaic. Is it not better for people to express their ideas about the unknown—and to have experiences of wonder, fear and ecstasy—than only to be vaguely aware of it and never to think at all? Speaking of folk-intuition, Lady Gregory says in her notes to the striking ghost play of *Shanwalla*: "I believe that what they (the people) feel and relate is perhaps of as great importance to that in us which is lasting, as the tested results of men of science examining into psychic things." A feeling of spacious environment is given to us by these plays, of paths leading over the hills and far away, of other people living in remote, strange countries. The outlook of the Irish peasantry does not seem to be so local as that of the rural

inhabitants of many countries, where in some of the provinces the peasants rarely travel by railway outside a radius of forty miles; in everyday life the visual horizon is their world's end, and they show complete indifference to the people who live on the other side of it. Four of Lord Dunsany's plays, in cheap, paper-covered editions (Putnam), have lately been brought out, so that examples of his beautiful and rhythmic prose are now in the reach of those who generally have to go without the luxury of possessing books, and we hope that *The Golden Doom* and *The Gods of the Mountains* will shortly appear in the same edition. It has been a pleasure to re-read these stories, for at once one is plunged into an atmosphere of expectancy, with continual suggestion of imminent surprise or of strange and sinister happenings. It is as if one were dreaming, conscious enough to appreciate the strong imagery, the rich colouring, the beauty of language, the humour—when the little weaknesses of present-day people are applied to the actors of dynasties ago, or in the treatment of a play, such as when the Jezebel-like Queen invites all her enemies to a feast in an underground vault and drowns them. All the time one is aware of unknown abysses lying beneath the apparently safe happenings of the moment. And one feels the watching intelligences of the gods, who with supercilious yet jealous eyes look upon mankind as a knot of darting and dancing gnats, each intently and futilely carrying out some time-pattern which leaves no trace upon eternity, but who are, all the same, relentlessly destroyed at the least sign of presumption. To add to our list we have received *Dramatic Legends*, by Padraic Colum (Macmillan), which contain his own translations from the Gaelic and those of others which he has done into verse, also some new poems. We have not space for commenting, as we should like to have done, upon his impressive poetic play, *The Miracle of the Corn*, or upon *The Bird of Jesus;* nor can we dwell upon *The Interpreters* (Macmillan), by "Æ," who sets his theme a century ahead of this time and meditates upon "what relation the politics of time may have to the politics of eternity." It is a great delight to meet "Æ" in poetic prose.

An ambitious attempt has been made by Dorothy St. Cryes in her tragedy and allegory, *The Holy City* (Longmans) to attain Himalayan heights, and if she has failed we appreciate at least her sincerity of purpose. Unfortunately it is impossible to read this play without contrasting it with that sublime drama of real life which culminated in the Crucifixion, and compared with those interesting and extraordinarily diverse characters the *dramatis personæ* of this story are nonentities. Neither the personality nor the intensity of vision of the Master is very convincing; in fact, Mahrah is the only character who impresses us. Her mother, her lover and the disciples and nobles are no more than machinery in the carrying out of the play. The author, when she draws attention to the exclusiveness of the Church and its conception of Heaven, where no sinners are allowed, seems to have forgotten the doctrine of Redemption. But it gives us food for thought when Mahrah cries:

> I cannot then but feel, if Christ were God,
> He had not stayed three days in Hell . . . three days!
> But through eternity, till Hell was . . . Heaven!

At times the writer is inclined to be hysterical and to use weak reiteration which does not give the same emphasis as strong, well-chosen, yet inevitable words which are the outcome of true inspiration. Too many times we hear "I tell you," "And none shall come between, I tell you, none"; or, "God!"—a favourite expression of the poetaster of this generation—or (*With emotion*) "Oh God! At last!" But in Mahrah's speech before the Master is killed by the rock there are no forced effects or tremulo, the style improves, and we are not aware of so many one-syllabled words which make staccato flippancies when the ear expects graver and more sonorous music in accordance with the theme. The climax is well carried out, and the author's message is made clear:

> The mist of doubt has risen, and I know
> The Holy City stands, and God is there.

P. M. P.

POETRY IN PROSE

AN appreciative correspondent, writing from the Malay States, appeals to us to make a feature of prose poetry. If she means we should collate examples of unconscious poetry in prose form, we commend the suggestion to readers and shall be glad to receive examples similar to the one quoted by Miss Lowden. But we do not extend the invitation to essays in poetical prose. We have seen many such attempts at fine writing lately and they are merely "hot air," a jumble of almost incoherent words and little sense. Miss Lowden very pertinently points out that her prose example is equal to modern "free verse," which, after all, is nothing more than a return to the cadenced prose of the seventeenth century, and very often is very ordinary prose printed in segments more or less closely corresponding with the phrase rhythm or normal sound rhythms of the language, being verse in appearance but prose in actuality, and without the beauty and dignity of the example quoted by our correspondent.

We are doubtful of the propriety of poetry in prose form. Metrical prose is seldom good prose, which carefully avoids the consecutive repetitions of the same rhythmic patterns, while it is the distinction of verse to follow a chosen pattern. As Mr. P. F. Baum points out in his *Principles of English Versification* (Harvard University Press and Mr. Humphrey Milford, 10s. 6d. net)—a very readable treatise on the art of poetry, which reaches us simultaneously with Miss Lowden's letter—"When the intensity of feeling justifies song, let there be song;" under powerful emotion patterned poetry becomes the natural vehicle of expression. Mr. Baum presents some excellent examples, broken up into "free-verse" lines, of the deliberate cadenced prose of Sir Walter Raleigh, Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne, who wrote under the influence of the late Renaissance movement, when prose was held to be worth cultivating on its own account, and while making no effort to conceal its definite rhythmic movements, was always careful that they should not become too monotonous or

obtrusive. Our fascinating critic proceeds to condemn the later descent into metrical prose; a kind of bastard verse disclosing a palpable design. Examples are abundant, "but the worst and most conspicuous offenders were Dickens and Blackmore." It may be a test of taste for us to quote, apropos Miss Lowden's suggestion, some examples of the condemned metrical prose of Dickens followed by a couple of passages of cadenced prose, of which Mr. Baum says, "So great is the subtlety, the variety, the art, that they never fail of their intended effect: they are justifiable because they justify themselves, partly by their lofty and dignified content, partly, of course, by their sheer artistry."

When Death strikes down the innocent and young
for every fragile form from which he lets
the panting spirit free
a hundred virtues rise
in shapes of mercy, charity and love,
to walk the world and bless it.
Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed
on such green graves
some good is born
some gentler nature comes.

DICKENS, *Old Curiosity Shop*, ch. 72.

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost,
"I made it link by link, and yard by yard."

DICKENS, *Christmas Carol.*

Simple 2 and 3 beat rhythms:

O eloquent just
and mighty Death!
whom none could advise
thou hast persuaded;
what none hath dared
thou hast done;
and whom all the world hath flattered
thou only hast cast out of the world
and despised.
Thou hast drawn together
all the far-stretched greatness,

all the pride, cruelty
and ambition of man,
and covered it all over
with these two
narrow words,
Hic jacet.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH, *History of the World*, Bk. V., ch. VI.

Mainly 3 beat rhythms.

What song the Syrens sang,
or what name Achilles assumed
When he hid himself among women,
though puzzling questions,
are not beyond all conjecture.
What time the persons of these ossuaries
entered the famous nations of the dead
and slept with princes and counsellors
might admit a wide solution.
But who were the proprietaries of these bones
or what bodies these ashes made up
were a question above antiquarism;
not to be resolved by man
nor easily, perhaps, by spirits
except we consult the provincial
guardians or tutelary Observators.

SIR THOMAS BROWN, *Urn Burial*, ch. 5.

The five volumes of *Modern English Essays* (Dent, 3s. each) in which that indefatigable litterateur, Mr. Ernest Rhys, has gathered together the best examples of the literary essay of the last 50 years, should be a happy hunting ground for poetry in prose, if it can be found in modern high-brow literature. From a hasty examination we are inclined to think the Addisons of our day are too precise—and in some respects too dull and trivial—to indulge in the weakness to which Carlyle and Gibbon, Dickens and Kingsley were addicted. There are exceptions. Prose, mellifluous and stately, can be found, particularly in the earlier volumes of this fascinating anthology, which should be the companion to *The Golden Book of Modern Poetry*, recently published by the same firm. Pater on

Leonardo De Vinci indulges in patterned prose, and there is a rhythm and geniality that is missing in many of the later essayists to be found in rich measure in Mark Pattinson and Swinburne, and subsequently in Belloc and A. C. Benson and George Sampson. But there are few examples of the poetical prose that once adorned the middle pages of the *Spectator*, an outstanding example of which was an eventide article by the late Canon Rawnsley a quarter of a century ago, in which the vesper song of birds was the prelude to a beautiful picture of the dying day. In Mr. Rhys's selection the poets' prose and the essays on poets are largely matter of fact and unpolished. Mr. Maurice Hewlett, writing on William and Dorothy Wordsworth and their mutual power of interpreting landscape, says, " There can be no doubt, I think, that they egged each other on, but I myself should find it hard to say which was egger-on and which the egged." Mr. Belloc, in his fragment *On an Unknown Country*, touches the fringe of our immediate subject when he says, " All that can best be expressed in words should be expressed in verse ; but verse is a slow thing to create ; nay, it is not really created : it is a secretion of the mind, it is a pearl that gathers round some irritant and slowly expresses the very essence of beauty and of desire that has lain long potential and unexpressed, in the mind of the man who secretes it." And in *The Art of the Essayist*, by Mr. A. C. Benson, we find a pertinent footnote :

> As literature develops, the distinction between poetry and prose will no doubt become harder to maintain. Coleridge said in a fruitful maxim, " The opposite of poetry is not prose but science ; the opposite of prose is not poetry, but verse ! " That is to say, poetry has as its object the kindling of emotion, and science is its opposite, because science is the dispassionate statement of fact ; but prose can equally be used as a vehicle for the kindling of emotion, and therefore may be in its essence poetical : but when it is a technical description of a certain kind of structure its opposite is verse—that is to say, language arranged in metrical and rhythmical form. We shall probably come to think that the essayist is more of a poet than the writer of epics, and that the divisions of literature will tend to be on the one hand the art of clear and logical statement, and on the other the art of emotional and imaginative expression. . . . The poet, perhaps, is the man who sees the greatness of life best, because he lives most in its beauty and fineness. But

my point is that the essayist is really a lesser kind of poet, working in simpler and humbler materials, more in the glow of life, perhaps, than in the glory of it, and not finding anything common or unclean.

* * * *

After our lament of the absence from contemporary criticism of such generous praise as Henley gave to T. E. Brown it would be ungracious to complain of Mr. Coulson Kernahan's exuberance in his *Six Living Poets* (Butterworth, 12s. 6d. net)—unfair, too, for Mr. Kernahan is frankly "rambling, discursive, and gossipy, taking pleasure only in appreciation." He scorns the modern habit of muck-raking; he does not concentrate on the spot that defiles the glorious robe of his hero. When the tide turned against Stephen Phillips and he became the sport of wanton, ignorant youths, who still return, when other topics fail, to the despicable game of hunting up his "weak lines" and traducing a character they are not capable of judging, Mr. Kernahan remained firmly fixed in his devotion to his maligned friend. (*The Times*, by the way, recently allowed itself to be used for a painfully foolish, entirely superfluous sneer at the character and literary merit of the one great poetic dramatist of our time.)

Mr. Kernahan's intention is to set the work of his six poets—not necessarily the six most famous living poets, but apparently the six most popular to-day—in so attractive a light as to send his readers to study for themselves all that he has written—the seldom achieved object of the anthologist. Mr. Kernahan's introductory studies, however, are more suitable for general consumption, more likely to serve their purpose than recent egregious manuals on contemporary poets. He is enthusiastic, sympathetic, readable and a gentleman—an Irish gentleman, too. He is most critical when dealing with Mr. Masefield's longer poems; most admirable when discussing Mr. Kipling. He does not deliberately set out to do so, but he helps us to realise why Kipling is scorned by the poetaster to whom England is an unpleasant name and God a myth. Kipling is a great English gentleman, the greatest Englishman alive, hated by little men because of his sincerity, his vision and

humanity, his reverence and simplicity, his scorn of faking and meanness. An inspired study of the real Kipling has yet to be done, but Mr. Kernahan's downright appreciation, hearty and manly as befits a man of vigorous action, is illuminating, and with the more partial apprizements of Messrs. Noyes, Drinkwater, Baring and others, supplies a great need in the literature of contemporary poetry.

THE POETRY SOCIETY IN INDIA

IN connection with the recent Industrial Exhibition at Karachi, a poetic conference was held which demonstrated the devotion to the ancient art among the Indian people. Mrs. Elsa Kazi very happily and opportunely conveyed a message from the Poetry Society and THE POETRY REVIEW, expressing deep interest in the Conference, from which a replica of the Poetry Society came into active being. The movement is of native origin, which gives it peculiar significance and international value. Sir Harcourt Butler described English as India's classic language, hoping at the same time that India would retain her individuality by systematic study of its own classic languages, and a correspondent pertinently points out, *apropos* the bardic conference, that " considering that not only the modern renaissance in India is entirely from English sources, and considering that in this case the fates have brought this through a country which is a poetic country *par excellence*, it is no wonder that we all write verse in English. Where can a budding artist find such a glorious band of poets as in English literature ? As time passes and as the mind begins to wake, nothing can mould and fashion the English mind to art like English poetry. There is no doubt that the native tongue will one day be spontaneously free and sing in its own accents, but there is no hurrying and forcing it. In this region conscious efforts not only achieve little but kill the bud. Neither money nor loans can help—only to wait and watch for the grant of the Gods. At present the surest method to prepare the way for such a day is to keep the divine company of the great singers, from Spenser to Francis Thompson." Again *apropos*, we publish in this issue a poem by Mrs. E. Kazi—a charming product of the Karachi conference, evidence of the spirit which lives and moves all over the world and makes the value and influence of the Poetry Society so great and permanent. The boldness and yet simplicity of the idea in the poem is a great delight, and justifies the hopes engendered by the bardic conference.

II

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Licence and Laxity—Poetry's Many Mansions—Leigh Hunt's Wise Definitions.

THIS month the poems suitable for prizes and commendations have nearly all been chosen on account of their simplicity, which is the result of concentrated thought and a pains-taking effort to find the word which exactly fits in meaning and rhythm. The poetic afflatus is not necessarily weakened by the original conception being worked upon or amended. How greatly such masters of poesy as Coleridge and Tennyson improved the original versions of many memorable stanzas might be instanced to rebuke modern carelessness and looseness bred of misunderstood license. We must leave our text for a moment, however, to reply to a correspondent who, conscious of being still on the lower slopes of Parnassus—a refreshing humility which entitles our friend to consideration—asks whether minor poetry can be anything more than an infliction on a world that has so much major poetry at its disposal. We can comfort our correspondent by quoting an apposite passage from Leigh Hunt's preface of the 1832 edition of his poems which we find in the 1923 Oxford Hunt—a comfortable volume that reaches us as we are struggling with our year's end problems in poetic values. The friend of Shelley and Keats enables us to reply appositely and effectively in words that carry weight and deserve to be pondered over: "I have such a reverence for poetry, pre-eminently so-called (by which I mean that which posterity and the greatest poets agree to call such), that I should not dare to apply the term to anything written by me in verse, were I not fortunate enough to be of opinion that poetry, like the trees and flowers, is not of one class only; but that if the plant comes out of Nature's hands, and not the gauze-maker's, it is still a plant, and has ground for it. All houses are not palaces, nor every shrine a cathedral. *In domo patris mei* (not to speak profanely) *mansiones multae sunt.*

"Poetry, in its highest sense, belongs exclusively to such men as Shakespeare, Spenser, and others, who possessed the deepest insight into the spirit and sympathies of all things; but poetry, in the most comprehensive application of the term, I take to be the flower of any kind of experience, rooted in truth, and issuing forth into beauty. All that the critic has a right to demand of it, according to its degree, is, that it should spring out of a real impulse, be consistent in its parts, and shaped into some characteristic harmony of verse. Without these requisites (apart from fleeting and artificial causes), the world will scarcely look at any poetical production a second time;

whereas, if it possess them, the humblest poetry stands a chance of surviving not only whatever is falsely so called, but much that contains, here and there, more poetical passages than itself; passages that are the fits and starts of a fancy without judgment—the incoherences of a nature, poetical only by convulsion, but prosaic in its ordinary strength."

And now to return to our immediate business. A licence and looseness of expression, by even those who chose form instead of free verse, was the chief characteristic of the stacks of MSS. received this month. A true artist is not satisfied with superficial facility; it is only after arduous spade-work that his mind is fertile enough to produce the flowers that in their perfection and simplicity appear to be so easily grown. These are quickly imitated by a crowd of paper flower makers who are heedless of the fact that if their products have colour and realism they have no life, scent or individuality. The traveller on the difficult road of art does not hurry along short cuts to his destination; he journeys slowly, constantly looking around him, ever learning new things, thinking, and receiving impressions that develop the faculties of the mind. We say of a pianist who plays wrong chords and shows faulty technique that he should either practise more, or give up music. Likewise we scorn an actor who does not know his part, and consequently cannot interpret it properly. We do not praise badly proportioned architecture. Nor would we look twice at a picture of a woman with a swollen face, holding, perhaps, a book in a hand drawn so carelessly that it could not possibly grip it in real life. And in the same way we are irritated by slovenly diction. Not that we want to encourage mere photographic representation and realism in verse; we would impress upon writers the immense importance of technique, without which the great ideal of permanence is rarely attained.

Having selected the prize poems we award 10s. 6d. each to Eva Dobell (Great Malvern) for *The Children's Spring Song*, a rhythmic poem that would be suitable for reading and speaking tests, and John F. Cranston (Edinburgh), whose Pilgrim finds the Holy Grail in the land of the Commonplace. The remainder of the Premium Award we divide between Irene Bell (Darlington), who achieves terseness and suggestiveness in her amusing verses on *The Poet as Bank Clerk*, W. Adams (Belfast), for originality in his lines on *Words*, and Cecil L. Heath (Birchington-on-Sea), whose poem, *The Farm House*, breathes the wholesome atmosphere of the country.

We commend especially: Irene Petch (Kirbymoorside), whose story of a doctor's waiting room, although somewhat morbid, has

power and realism ; Rosalind Vallance (Guildford), who begins her poem in a delightfully descriptive manner, but wanders too much in a lengthy digression ; J. H. Foster (Chelmsford), for verses on *Freedom* that are slightly monotonous but clinched by a good ending ; E. M. Fayrer (Edinburgh), whose lines in free verse, *Sic te Amo*, are well written, although the final idea has been used before ; Nancy Kiddy (Highgate), whose *Moonshine Jewels* should have a different title, for colours vanish in the moonlight ; A. Doris L. Wilson (Renhold) for a carefully finished little poem entitled *The Cherry Tree*, and Cyril G. Taylor (Edinburgh), in whose poem, *The Exile*, there is a lilt and optimism which give unexpected interest to a hackneyed subject.

We also commend J. M. G. Partridge (Warwick), R. Ross (Hove), M. Pardoe (Port Erroll), H. J. R. Pease (Oxford), Marguerite Goode (West Croydon) and " Melba " (Hanwell).

The Liverpool Premium Awards.

We have received a fair number of poems in response to the Liverpool Premium offer, but while a few of them are above the average in merit they lack real distinction and the inspiration that one would expect a writer identified with Liverpool to possess and be capable of expressing. We do not mean that under ordinary circumstances we should not have awarded the Premium, but we think it fairer to author and subject to carry the proportion, payable now, forward, and award it later, when we may, perhaps, have other poems under consideration. It is not intended to imply that the present poems may not receive commendation eventually, but also a share of the Premium available for this particular purpose. They are merely reserved for further consideration with what is now an offer for £2 2s. for Liverpool poems and £2 2s. for a poem by a writer associated with the Liverpool district by birth or residence. We are also holding over our offer of a book prize for the list of poems dealing with Liverpool, as we have not received enough entries. We urge competitors to read again what was said in our last issue in relation to this special competition, and in entering to pay consideration to the general conditions. With regard to some of the poems already sent in, we commend Edney Peters, in whose poem, which begins with a good simile, the interest is not sustained ; Rachael Bates, who is more successful in her B poem when less hampered by subject ; Hilda Williams, whose *Ode to Liverpool* is too long ; John Wallace, who finishes a somewhat laboured sonnet with a fine sestet ; and Allen W. Laing, with his atmospheric

XVIII. century poem, of which the ending, however, is too obscure for the average reader to understand.

Bristol Poems.

In order to secure a large number of claimants for Mr. E. J. Watson's Premium offer for worthy poems by writers associated with Bristol, we extend the time of entry until February 1st, the period elapsing between the announcement and the original closing date having been somewhat short. The MSS. already to hand, including a really individual piece by J. W. Norgrove, a member of the Bristol Fellowship, will be considered in conjunction with any other MSS. which reach us under the terms of the original offer.

Prose Articles and Criticism.

The appreciation of M. Hunter-Wood's article on Walter de la Mare from an individual standpoint would alone justify a revival of our premiums for short prose articles within the scope of The Poetry Review. Miss Hunter-Wood's article is a delicate and sincere piece of personal appreciation which is fresher than the average jog-trot literary article, repeating time-worn prejudices and ill-considered partialities. The other manuscripts we received were of lesser merit. Miss Whitford's pleasant little essay on Robert Bridges is placed out of court by our having recently published a much more exhaustive article on the poet's work. We cannot altogether agree with Mr. Adam's opinion of Tagore. The appreciations and criticisms which we hope to evoke need not necessarily coincide entirely with our own views, but we must be in general agreement with them if we are to make use of them, and we hope contributors will avoid unbalanced assertions about their favourite writers. We have to remind readers that we continue to offer copies of Geraldine Hodgson's impressive *Criticism at a Venture* for short essays not exceeding 1,500 words, the subject being left to the contributor, who should avoid repeating recent Poetry Review articles. A contemporary poet may be examined, or an ideal anthology outlined, or views on current tendencies expressed.

Poems of the Month Competition.

From the selection made by readers for this competition it would appear that the six most distinctive poems of the month are:

Glengarry, Constance N. Troy (*Chambers*).
Heifers at Evening, Percy Ripley (*Spectator*).
Cristo Morto, Francis Brett Young (*London Mercury*).

Autumn's Touch, H. H. (*Morning Post*).
My Gardens, Dorothy Frances Gurney (*Country Life*).
The Blackbird's Song, Phyllis Howell (*Country Life*).

We deplore that few readers take the trouble to nominate the poem that has impressed them in their own general reading and that the few enthusiasts who contribute to this causerie specialise on two or three periodicals. The small book prizes in this section go to : Mrs. H. Henderson (Edinburgh), H. Legge (Hants), E. Mackenzie (Glasgow), A. Browne (Manchester), N. Walker (Staffs), and the sender of *Cristo Morto*, who is asked to send name and address.

A YORKSHIRE LETTER.

Leeds, December 17th.

THE outstanding feature of the past month is undoubtedly the visit of Mr. W. B. Yeats to the Leeds Centre of The Poetry Society. The charm and fascination of Mr. Yeats' personality are well-known, and his position in the world of letters makes any lecture from him authoritative. He spoke first on the Irish Dramatic Movement, and gave his audience an intimate view of the beginnings of this great movement, which was all the more interesting in view of our efforts to bring about a similar movement in the North-Country. (Mr. Yeats told me afterwards that although he had little knowledge of Yorkshire, he saw no reason why we should not do in the North-Country what he and his colleagues have done in Ireland.) In conclusion, by special request, he read a few of his own poems, commenting on the origins of most of them, and pouring good-natured scorn on the worthy and industrious folk who attempt to "explain" them. The whole lecture was made all the more enjoyable by the lecturer's characteristic wit and racy style, which lent a humorous aspect to the most trivial anecdote.

A reputation for humour will often go much further with an audience than any amount of genuine wit. I feel quite sure that if Mr. Walter de la Mare's lecture at the University had been read by Mr. G. K. Chesterton the audience would have been convulsed with laughter from beginning to end. As it was, the most they would allow themselves was an occasional mild titter. I do not remember ever having heard a more witty and amusing lecture, and I have certainly never heard one in which the humour was so well blended with such sound opinions nor such valuable information.

The Winter Number of *The Microcosm* is now ready, and may be obtained from the editor, Mrs. Chas. Ratcliffe, at City Chambers, Leeds, price 2s. 6d. It contains poems by George Cowling, A. V. Ratcliffe, and Michael Hainisch (President of the Austrian Republic); drawings by Sir Chas. Holmes (Director of the National Gallery), Luigi Kasimir and Fred Lawson; articles by Pauline Clough Young, James A. Mackereth and Harriet Monro (Editor of the Chicago *Poetry*). All numbers of *The Microcosm* are sold on behalf of various charities, all costs of production, etc., being defrayed by Sir Edward Brotherton (Vice-President of the Leeds Centre of The Poetry Society). The present number is sold for the benefit of "Princess Mary's Children's Hour." I have also received a copy of the Hull Literary Club's publication, *Humberside*. This is, I understand, to be published annually, or half-annually, and will contain articles poems and stories by members of the Club.

On October 30th Mr. W. F. Harvey gave a lecture at the Leeds Art Club on "The Poetry of Australia," which introduced his hearers to some little-known writers, hard-riding ranchers for the most part, with but little time to spare for the niceties of poetic technic, yet memorable for the pictures they give of Australian life. Mr. Harvey himself is a Yorkshireman, and has spent some years in Australia; having also served in the navy. He has written poems, but is chiefly notable as a prose-writer, having written some of the finest short stories of recent years.

The next Poetry Society lecture in Leeds takes place on Thursday, when Mr. Robert Graves will speak on "What is Bad Poetry." Anyone who has read his recent book *On English Poetry* will be desirous of hearing the author speak.

From Huddersfield comes a rumour of a Public Lecture in March by Captain L. Cranmer-Byng. Captain Cranmer Byng was to have lectured there last February, but was unfortunately booked for the date on which he had promised to come to Leeds, so that the lecture was indefinitely postponed. I hear, too (unofficially), that Halifax is to have a public meeting before long. Perhaps some of the other Centres will begin to wake up shortly.

The Leeds Centre's next meeting will be a social evening and reading of members' verse. Poems will be welcomed from any member of the Society, and should be sent to the Chairman, Mr. T. Wray Milnes, B.Sc., 3, Barkly Road, Beeston, Leeds, not later than January 12th. Poems should be signed with a *pseudonym* and the name of the author enclosed in an envelope inscribed with the *pseudonym* on the outside.

S. MATTHEWMAN.

ENGLISH LOVE POETRY

MR. CHAS. WILLIAMS gave a lecture on "Some Notes on English Love Poetry" at an open meeting of the Hampstead Centre of the Poetry Society. He suggested that English Romantic Poetry does not bear the right proportion to Poetry as a whole, nor to life. Life is usually treated in our humorous, casual, English way; and some of our greatest English poets hardly speak of it at all. *In Memoriam* is the poetry of friendship, but would not have been written if Hallam had not died. The lady of romance was usually young, beautiful, lighthearted, taking pleasure in life; and had no faults except inconstancy!

The love-poem which seems to sum up all of love, is this—

> "When Molly smiles beneath her cowl,
> My heart, it feels I know not how."

All English love poetry is a comment on these lines—thinking about what one feels, and not knowing what it is.

In the greater poems we find two sides of love: *Passion*, which is not permanent, and involves suffering; and *Imagination*, which produces a calm, surprised sort of happiness. Bridges has one poem of pure love, *I Will not Let Thee Go*. We have tragedies of love in plenty, but very little indeed of the months and years of happy, married love (exception, Coventry Patmore's *Angel in the House*, and some of Shakespeare). Poems on the death of the beloved are numerous. There is a love which seems to combine the two—a love of deep devotion, akin to religion, "I touch her, like my beads, with devout care."

Another view taken by the poets Mr. Williams called "The Wail of Virginity"—a permanent refusal of earthly love, in man or woman, married or unmarried. In Milton and Wordsworth it may have been owing to an early loss. This Platonic relationship may be described as "all negatives." Yeats feelingly writes of the *opposite* state,

> "All that have ever loved, have loved that way."

Love, at its highest, is set free from earthly love, to manifest something greater; it is, God known, and making Himself known, in the ecstasy of love.

* * * *

A Bloomsbury Centre is in course of formation. Mr. Michael Houghton, c/o THE POETRY REVIEW, will be glad to hear from prospective members, who would welcome a Central London centre.

THE ART OF SPEAKING VERSE
AUTUMN EXAMINATION, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, SOUTH KENSINGTON, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1922

CERTIFICATE CLASS: JUNIOR AND SENIOR DIVISIONS:

EXAMINERS' REPORT

THE feature on this occasion was the exceptional number of well-trained voices. Almost all were exceptionally good in voice production—clear enunciation, exact pronunciation, careful diction—a remarkable tribute to the value and effectiveness of the teaching received and also of the limitations of technical training. Interpretation was the weak part in this division. It was either poor and unimpressive—naturally immature—on the whole, with some brilliant exceptions, or perhaps what is worse—artificial and parrot-like, and as mechanical as physical drill without individuality. Many of the candidates had been drilled and not educated, not having as yet acquired individuality. Many technically excellent renderings were mere repetitions of a lesson learned by heart, without freshness and spontaneity. One hopes that with such excellent groundwork, individuality will develop, that the young people will find their own expression. It is the interpretation that matters, the thing insisted upon by the Poetry Society, the end to which the voice training, however desirable and helpful in itself, is only the means and the mechanism. If we did not think this end is not being earnestly striven after, and did not recognise that at this stage real individuality of expression cannot be insisted on, we should not be justified in awarding the certificate in some cases in which it is perhaps deserved on general grounds and as an encouragement to further effort and to the development of intelligent effective vocal rendering of poetry. One recognises in practice the advantage of progressing by stages, of the bronze medal being made a sequel to the certificate, to be prepared for as a further step towards the attainment of a higher standard of expression more nearly approaching the excellence the Poetry Society desires to secure. Several performances were so good, however, that any examiner would have been satisfied that the bronze medal had been earned and should not be withheld at this stage merely to secure the candidate's attendance at a later Bronze Medal examination, if it can be awarded now without prejudice to the pupil's progress and the interruption of further studies. Where real intelligence is shown, with an evident delight in, and appreciation of, the words used, the beauty and fineness of the sounds, and the meaning of the poems, we are satisfied that the Society's object has been attained, that something more than

elocution has been produced. Reversely, in our efforts to secure the expression of "a clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it," we are disappointed by the persistence of a feeble type of verse among the selections brought forward at each examination—dull, poor pieces that handicap the candidates, suggest that voice-production is the thing that matters and the words spoken of secondary consideration, and accentuate the prevailing faults of wrong emphasis, the stressing of unimportant words, the jerky, staccato and monotonous delivery of the lines that marked some of the candidates' efforts and contrasted with the clear enunciation and exact pronunciation. The multiplication table might just as well have been substituted for delicate significant verse. In this connection excellent material can be found in Mr. E. G. Pertwee's new anthology, *The New Spirit in Poetry* (Routledge), and the larger new anthology, *The Golden Book of English Poetry* (Dent). It is gratifying to note that the excellent *Junior Poetry Book* in Dent's King Treasuries, is being widely used and it is hoped that the candidates are encouraged not only to study the single poems presented, but to make themselves familiar with their favourite poet's work generally. We too often find the candidates know only one poem. This is contrary to the spirit behind these examinations, and not likely to lead to the desired development. It would be better to draw on and have thoroughly read such handbooks as Harrap's Life and Poetry Series, especially in association with the test pieces.

NOTE.—The Examiners found the following Certificate Candidates so good in their respective divisions that they are recommended for the bronze medal without further examination :—

Junior—Esther Rosenberg, Rose Mishkin, Jessie Walsh, Nancy Dugon, M. J. Reeves Hutchinson.

Senior—Mary K. Danielli, Grace Wagstaffe, Edith Courtauld, M. E. Gaunt.

Adult—Gladys E. London.

CERTIFICATES.

Junior—*Esther Rosenberg, *Rose Mishkin, *Katie Nieman, Rose Shapiro, Rose Mintz, Evelyn Antrich, *M. J. Reeves Hutchinson, Freda Barratt, Elsie Hodge, Doris Himmel, Thelma Carman, Jane Prentice, Laura Tanner, Elyrick Howard, Dorothy Rowling, Irene Barnes, Ethel Baker, Mabel Reeves, *Jessie Walsh, Carmen Glover,

* Special Mention.

Evelyn Spurway, Doris Mitchell, Muriel Kimber, Alice Deighton, *Nancy Dugon, *Peggy Knight, Betty Rowland, Montague Everitt.

Senior—*Nancy Grandy, *Mary K. Danielli, Kathleen Benn, *Doris Cutler, *Grace Wagstaffe, May Orton, Elaine Shanks, *Edith E. Courtauld, *Margaret E. Gaunt, Dorothy Violet Laws, *Viola Cuvelier, Dorothy Everitt.

Adult—Kathleen V. W. Parken, †Gladys E. London, Kathleen E. Stafford.

BRONZE MEDALS.

Junior—*Josephine Freedman, Becky Marks, Johanna Hayes, M. Burton-Brown, *Monica Brett, Katreen Lack, *Peggy Van Praagh, Joyce Brown, Gwennie Cummins, Helen Mary Wilkinson, Vivian Shanks, Joan Smith.

Senior—Annette Walker, Vera Hopkins, Evelyn Gray, Winifred Stallworthy, Erica Priest.

Adult—E. H. Rogers, †Ivy Mitchell, †Daisy Phyllis Wood, Gladys Brainbridge.

SILVER MEDALS.

Senior—Celia Shanowitz, *Evelyn Russell.

Adult—*Daisy J. C. Connor, *Helen C. Watson.

POETRY IN PROSE.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

SIR,—I have been for several years a most enthusiastic reader of your magazine. May I make a suggestion? THE POETRY REVIEW certainly covers a very great deal of ground, and deals with a variety of subjects; one is always certain of finding something in its pages which will appeal to one. But I think that there is one field of poetical beauty which seems to have been overlooked. This is what, for want of a better term, I will call poetry in prose form. To give an example: this is from *Prince Otto*, by R.L.S.:—

"She saw the white cascade, the stars wavering in the shaken pool, foam flitting, and high overhead the tall pines on either hand serenely drinking starshine."

If that wonderful word-picture had been written by a modern poet doubtless he would have arranged it something like this:—

She saw the white cascade,
The stars

---

* Special Mention. † Honours.

Wavering in the shaken pool,
Foam flitting,
And high overhead the tall pines on either hand
Serenely
Drinking starshine.

And it would be called *vers libre*, or something of the sort, and accepted and recognised as poetry. Is it any the less poetry because it is written in prose form ? Surely not !

I could give plenty more examples, both from the works of modern writers and others, but one should be enough to illustrate my meaning.

My suggestion is—Would it not be possible to reserve a small corner of The Poetry Review in each issue for just one—or more if space permits—gems of poetry in prose form ? This could be selected from readers' contributions, the Editor choosing the one he thinks the best.

Poetry in prose form, unexpectedly encountered when reading books, is always a very great delight to me, and it seems a pity that such a thoroughly poetical magazine as The Poetry Review should continue to overlook and neglect this unending and fascinating source of beauty. With the very best of wishes for the continued success of your magazine,—I am, yours truly,

(Miss) J. M. L. Lowden.

c/o Hongkong Shanghai Bank,
Sungei Patani, Kedah, Malay States.

[Our correspondent's letter is dealt with elsewhere in this issue.—Ed.]

CHELSEA CENTRE.

Miss Edith Sitwell spoke with great enthusiasm of the young poets specially connected with the Sitwell group, of which Seigfried Sassoon is a member. She also explained one of her own poems, which had puzzled any of her readers who did not take it as a joke. It is to be regretted that she took such a gloomy view of the efforts of most contemporary poets who do not belong to the Sitwell group, but she is always interesting, and she had a crowded audience.

On January 9th, 1923, Evan Firth will speak on " Lyrics," and will very kindly sing some that have been set to music to illustrate his " talk." As he is well known in opera and concert work it will be very interesting.

On February 13th Walter Sichel has most kindly consented to speak on " Lyrical Poetry."

THE OBSCURE IN VERSE

IN thinking or writing of the Poetry Society, I always start with the acknowledged object of its existence—viz., to promote "a clearer, deeper sense of the best in Poetry and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it." This joy can only be got from poetry at its best, and of course from poetry which the average intelligent reader can comprehend and recognise as such.

The *Spectator* has shown us lately something of a different nature. It is labelled in big letters POETRY, and over and again I have, on reading my *Spectator*, been forced to think of the pictures in coloured chalks made by the children in our infants' school, where a round green hairy blob with a yellow stalk has the legend attached, "This is a tree."

If the *Spectator* label was "Verse" it would be better, but Poetry is a far greater thing than Verse, as is rightly said on page 47 of our last number, and though prose may be poetical, "poetry is the art of emotional and imaginative expression, whilst the aim of good prose is clear and logical statement." Now, it must not be supposed that because good prose is clear and therefore easily intelligible, poetry may be obscure and difficult to understand. And I would go further, and say that inasmuch as it is obscure it is not good poetry, if indeed it is to be called poetry at all.

We have had a good deal of comment lately on a bit of *Spectator* "poetry" signed Edith Sitwell. This is so difficult and obscure that nine readers out of every ten give it up as meaningless and repellent. But, of course, the author meant something, and supposed that readers would make out what that something was. One or two boldly declare that it is perfectly intelligible; others admit that after studying it repeatedly they are not yet sure what it means, but they take it to be great poetry, just as not long ago many people of quite ordinary capacity declared to the world that cubism was great, that a drawing of many mixed

lines, straight and curved, and various nondescript shapes was, when labelled "Portrait of a Lady," a beautiful conception. One critic I recall said, "Oh, yes, we know these pictures very well; we have lots of them at our place." And he was the medical officer at a lunatic asylum.

But, granted that some people can really understand such products as Miss Sitwell's, and that they have a deep and mystic meaning, is it not mere waste of time to write them? The great authorities are agreed that poetry must have for its aim the giving of pleasure; and in order to give pleasure it must be easily intelligible to average educated people by reason of its clarity and delightful to listen to by reason of its melody. Hence, when a bit of verse has neither of these qualities it is not on the right lines. Browning is instanced as a poet who, though he could write splendid verse with all the characteristics of great poetry, would often write so obscurely that when asked what so and so meant he had no shame in saying, "Really, I don't know; but probably I did at the time mean something." The poetry critic of the *Spectator* thinks that what it took a whole Browning Society to unravel when it first came out, we can get at the meaning of more quickly now: this is in a measure true, but she adds that our children will be born understanding it. This I take leave to doubt, and I go farther, and believe that a hundred years hence much of Browning will cease to attract or be read at all widely on account of its obscurity, though his easily read and generally intelligible poems will doubtless inherit immortality.

No writers of verse, as long as it is not indecent, should be discouraged; it is excellent practice, even for the quite young. Some writers perhaps *cannot* make themselves plainly intelligible, but then they ought not to publish; some are, I fancy, wilfully obscure, and this is a practice which in these days of educational progress ought not to be tolerated.

W. F. R.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

" *Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes angulus ridet.*"—HORACE, *Odes*, Book II, 6.

I NEEDS must sing, for I was born
At Stratford, on an April morn.
With such a goodly heritage,
How can my spirit but engage
In melody ? Alas, my lute
But jangles 'neath my touch ! yet mute
I cannot be, for I was born
At Stratford, on an April morn.

At Stratford, then, I first drew breath,
Scarce knew my sire, untimely death
Cut short his pleasing song and rule
O'er Shakespeare's famous Grammar School.*
I must confess Stratford was not
In our young eyes a hallowed spot ;
We scorned the cult—'twas our great pride
We'd never set a foot inside
That favoured house in Henley Street,
Where pilgrims of the ages meet.
But this our lack of reverence
Was natural—" Americans ! "—
Thus Stratford gibed, I grieve to say,
At devotees, in my young day.
All honour theirs who taught the earth
To love the house that gave *him* birth !
For Stratford did not value then
Her heritage of famous men ;
Her wit it was to designate
A citizen who'd served the State
" Colonial Mutton-grower "—he

* The Reverend Henry Griffith Evans, M.A. Twentieth Wrangler and second class classical honours, Cambridge University. Head-Master of Stratford, 1868-1874. Wrote *Verses, by H.G.E.* Died in 1874, aged 36.

Australian, K.C.M.G.*
(Let Will's own words the sequel tell,
That all was well that ended well;
For Stratford later made amends,
Her reparation lustre lends
To name already famous—she
Elected to the Mayoralty
For twenty years the man whose worth
In other lands provoked her mirth.)
And when in nature's course we fell
Instant and life-long 'neath the spell,
We—such is young perversity—
Mocked Stratford's dire adversity,†
Regretfully conviction owned—
The cipher plain, Shakespeare dethroned!
(E'en wiser folk devotion prove
By kindly jesting where they love.)
I sometimes wonder whether this
Was not the hand of Nemesis—
While Stratford taught irreverence,
We learned to jest at her expense!
More Attic was my mother's wit,
The wiser Stratford was for it.

We loved that walk in infancy
Across the fields to Shottery;
Knee-deep in buttercups we'd play
Where Will first kissed Anne Hathaway.
The golden fields of Shottery
Immortalise his poesy,
For buttercups were born that day
Of songs to sweet Anne Hathaway,
And buttercups and daisies blow
Where song of youth with love's aglow.

And later—of that famous tree,

---

* Doubtless because this Knight Commander of the Most Noble Order of St. Michael and St. George had owned a sheep-ranch in Australia.

† Stratford was naturally greatly distressed by the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy, and we pretended to be convinced Baconians.

The New Place Gardens' mulberry,
We ate, and stained our lips, as he
Who ravished earth with fantasy.

And as a dream within a dream
Come memories of Avon's stream ;
Ah, who can doubt his genius
Was born of Avon's loveliness !

With youthful ardour we essayed
The Rapids,* where we had to wade
And drag the boat up ; then the Mill
And weir confronted us, but will
And muscle won ; and on we went,
Till checked by what I still resent—
A boom across the river lay
To keep the trespasser away
From Charlecote, where young Will, we fear,
Went after Justice Shallow's deer ;
But youthful minds on pleasure bent,
Worse obstacles can circumvent—
A schoolboy's tea in Charlecote Park,
Then idly homeward through the dark.

My age is sere, yet I recall
That tunnelled lawn,† the Church-yard wall,
Which front the river—Lucy's Mill—
Who knows them not ? more famous still
And yet more loved,
The Church, whose stones
Shrine jealously the Poet's bones ;
Its spire, grey even in his times,
Our age-long avenue of limes.

In childhood's days we loved to sit
In those carved stalls just opposite

* Three stretches on the upper river, where currents made navigation difficult and dangerous.

† "*That tunnelled lawn.*" The three boat-houses running under Mr. Charles Flower's lawn adjoining the Church-yard.

His monument, and gaze upon
The curious dress of days by-gone,
And spell out each quaint-looking word—
"GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE.
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE.
BLEST BE YE MAN YT SPARES THES STONES.
AND CVRST BE HE YT MOVES MY BONES."—
Perchance my childish fancy heard
(Yet quick to catch are infant ears)
His spirit singing through the spheres!

With such a goodly heritage,
How can my spirit but engage
In melody? for I was born
At Stratford, on an April morn.

EDWARD GRIFFITH EVANS.

TREES IN THE STREET

PRIM crimson buds, pale wistful leaves,
Sun, and an April shower,
While underneath two children play
At marbles by the hour.

White cherry blossom everywhere,
Like snow in summertime—
Yet they passed by, and made their vow
Beneath the sombre lime.

The stately chestnut, russet-drest,
Knows why they meet no more,
They stamped in wrath and crushed the leaves
That wove his golden floor.

Bare empty branches and the wind,
Rain and November sleet—
Alone she came and cried against
The cherry in the street.

G. G.

THE GENIUS OF DONNE

TO write of him whom Ben Jonson esteemed as "in some things the first poet in the world," and addressed as "Donne the delight of Phœbus and each Muse," is a task one approaches with a mixture of diffidence and elation: diffidence, because in fear that the things one will say of him have been better said by others; elation, because the work of this "astonishing" poet breathes in almost every line so vital a zest, so masterful a virility that to achieve dulness in its discussion might puzzle the veriest dunce.

The fame which Donne—he pronounced it Dunne, by the way—neither sought nor valued came to him spontaneously, the birthright of a man apparently recognised from the first by his contemporaries as one of the most remarkable intellects of a remarkable age. Those who cherish the delusion that fame has its genesis in popular adulation and *réclame*, or that it is in any way related to notoriety, may be reminded that, with the exception of the *Anatomy of the World*, and one or two occasional pieces, none of Donne's poetry was published until two years after his death. "But if Donne's poems were not printed," says one of his recent editors, "they had at any rate a wide circulation in MSS. among the wits and literary men of the age." * In many of his letters to friends or patrons mention is made of accompanying copies of verses, and of these verses further copies were, no doubt, frequently made and distributed. Hence we find that Donne figures very prominently in the common-place books of the period, and many poems of dubious authorship were rightly or wrongly attributed to him.

II

Donne's harassed life has been told once for all—too briefly, yet with unsurpassable sympathy and verisimilitude

* E. K. Chambers, bibliographical note to *Poems of John Donne*, vol. I, in *The Muses Library*.

—by his friend Izaak Walton. The son of a London merchant, he was born in or about 1573, was educated at both universities, and studied law at Lincoln's Inn. After travelling to Cadiz with the Earl of Essex, and visiting Spain, Italy and the Azores, he became the private secretary of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere. He was ambitious, and the ball was at his feet; but Eros intervened. He met, loved and secretly married Lady Ellesmere's niece, Anne, daughter of Sir George More, Chancellor of the Garter and Lieutenant of the Tower. The infuriated father not only obtained Donne's dismissal but the brief committal to prison of himself and the two friends who had helped to bring about the wedding. It was a case of the world lost, and, one may with some reservations add, well lost for love. Before his marriage Donne had been something of a libertine; his rapidly growing family and incessant pecuniary worries would have put an end to that, even if his love of his wife had not been as lasting as it assuredly was passionate and tender.

So he who had written

> I can love her and her, and you and you,
> I can love any, so she be not true.

came to write, a year after meeting the woman who had captured his errant heart,

> Let us love nobly, and live and add again
> Years and years unto years, till we attain
> To write threescore; this is the second of our reign.

Walton records a conversation of Donne with a friend, presumably Izaak himself, in which towards the close of his life the poet says that he now plainly saw that it was God's Will that he should never settle nor thrive till he entered the ministry. It is at least clear that the forfeiture of his post in Lord Ellesmere's household was a death-blow to Donne's prospect of political advancement. He was twenty-eight when he married, and forty-two when he took Orders, and the fourteen years' interval was a period

of makeshift and penury, barely weathered by availing himself for years together of the hospitality of Sir Francis Wolly in Surrey, and later of Sir Robert Drury in London. In one of the letters quoted by Walton Donne says bitterly : "My fortune hath made me such as that I am rather a sickness or a disease of the world than any part of it," while in a verse letter to Sir Henry Wotton at Venice, devoting one of its ten stanzas to himself, he writes :

> For me !—if there be such a thing as I—
> Fortune—if there be such a thing as she—
> Finds that I bear so well her tyranny
> That she thinks nothing else so fit for me.

Donne was no sceptic, and there is nothing surprising in the fact that he came to see the hand of God in the fate that compelled him to enter the Church. This haven from the sea of troubles on which he tossed so long had been offered him years before he, in fact, entered it, but he seems to have had a strong reluctance to submit his proud heart and fiery intellect to the yoke of ecclesiastical responsibility. It was not until his lingering hope of civil preferment was dashed by the flat refusal of James I to do anything for him unless he would take Orders that he at last gave way.* Things went more smoothly for him after that, and six years later, when he was made Dean of St. Paul's, he became comparatively affluent. To force a genius into the Church against his will was just such a piece of tyranny as one would expect of James I, and one resents it for Donne, even though he professed unmixed gratitude on his own account. The world's gain has been a thick volume of erudite sermons ; its loss, who knows what masterpiece of unfettered maturity ? The profound sadness which permeates the later works of Donne, augmented no doubt by the death of his wife two years after his ordination, seems to be that of a broken spirit, completely disillusioned about life, and detached from all mundane ambitions. It is no reflection upon the genuineness of his piety and peni-

* In the year 1615.

tence to suggest that a repressed rancour born of the enforced renunciation of these ambitions may have subconsciously contributed to his despondency. One of the last acts of his life was to pose for a life-size portrait by Martin Droeshout, enveloped in a winding-sheet; and this remembrancer of mortality was kept thenceforth at his bedside. When, shortly after, he died (March 31st, 1631), he "disposed his hands and body into such a posture as required not the least alteration by those that came to shroud him." How vividly this recalls the close of one of the *Divine Sonnets*: "Turn," he had written,

> O pensive soul to God, for He knows best
> Thy grief, for He put it into my breast.

Chronologically, Donne's poems fall into three main divisions. The *Satires* and the *Love Poems* (including the *Elegies*) belong to the beginning, say the first twenty-five years, of his life. The *Divine Poems* belong to the period after his ordination, say the last fifteen years. The *Verse Letters*, *Funeral Elegies* and *Epithalamia* are intermediate in date, feeling and subject-matter: they reveal a mind in transition from the levity and cynicism of youth to the humility and awe of impending dissolution. As regards poetic value, truth compels the statement that, with a few magnificent exceptions, the *Divine Poems* are inferior to the secular, a fact which justifies Mr. Massingham in characterising as "extraordinary" Mrs. Meynell's exclusion of all the latter from *The Flower of the Mind*. Donne has, indeed, been shabbily treated by anthologists: Palgrave's much-belauded *Golden Treasury* gives just one example (and a slightly dubious one, at that) of his work. Mr. Massingham, in his Seventeenth Century Collection,* has, however, made handsome amends; and deserves a special word in acknowledgment of his courageous inclusion of that masterpiece of invective, *The Apparition*, concerning which he says: "In the sheer terror of cumulative hate, I know nothing like it."

* *A Treasury of Seventeenth Century English Verse*. Chosen and edited by H. J. Massingham. Macmillan, 1919.

III

Donne's reputation as a poet stands to-day as high, perhaps higher, than it has ever done, but he is comparatively little read. The explanation of this anomaly may depend upon the fact that so much of his best work abounds in passages liable to offend readers unable or unwilling to apply a purely æsthetic standard. This limitation applies in general more to feminine than to masculine minds; and whereas women probably form the majority of habitual readers of verse, the critics and connoisseurs who determine poetic repute are mostly men. Some of Donne's love-lyrics may be called amoral; others, perhaps the earliest, are distinctly antimoral. They can for the most part be enjoyed only by those who read them in the spirit of Nietzsche's aphorism: "What is done out of love, always takes place beyond good and evil." Thus in that supremely beautiful poem, *The Dream*, Donne writes of love:

> 'Tis not all spirit pure and brave
> If mixture it of fear, shame, honour have.

But there are in Donne's works other stumbling-blocks for sensitive readers than those of mere moral attitude. There is his frequent coarseness, his not infrequent indecency, his occasional nastiness. Of these, the two last demand no more than frank admission; the first calls for discrimination. Coarseness of some degree, being practically universal among the great masters, cannot be condemned offhand: it is perhaps as often a quality as a defect, and no sound judge of poetry will be easily repelled by it. "The refined," says Walter Sickert, "are perhaps further from Art, who is a robust and racy wench, than any class." In strong and competent hands the ugly, the crude, the bizarre can be made to subserve the ends of poetry as discord subserves those of music; they are indeed less alien from those ends than the smooth insignificance of the pretty.

Strictly speaking, Donne is seldom obscure, but his lines are so packed with meaning, the transitions of thought,

feeling and metaphor so swift and startling, that he makes demands on the attention which many readers will be unable or unwilling to concede. He wrote mainly to please or to ease himself, and the full appreciation of his work is to be had on no easier terms than repeated solitary study. In the Epistle preceding *The Progress of the Soul* he says: "I will have no such readers as I can teach." In the last stanza of this unfinished poem he goes further, intimating his indifference whether he has any readers at all:

> Whoe'er thou beest that reads this sullen writ
> Which just as much courts thee as thou dost it,
> Let me arrest thy thoughts.

Born poet as he was, Donne speaks with little respect of the art in which he so excelled, and to the exercise of which he must have owed so many hours of delight. The true explanation of this fact is an intriguing problem, but that it is a fact the following examples may testify. In *The Triple Fool* he flouts his folly "for loving, and for saying so in whining poetry." In a letter to Sir John Goodyere, he declines a suggestion that he shall address a commendadatory poem to a great lady (probably the Countess of Huntingdon) on the ground that "that knowledge which she hath of me was in the beginning of a graver course than of a poet, into which (that I may keep my dignity) I would not seem to relapse." In another letter, addressed in 1612 to George Garrard, he writes, "Of my Anniversaries, the fault which I acknowledge in myself is to have descended to print anything in verse, which though it have excuse even in our times, by men who profess and practise much gravity; yet I confess I wonder how I declined to it, and do not pardon myself." According to Ben Jonson, Donne, after he was made a Doctor, repented highly of his poetic achievements, and sought to destroy them.

It is probable that the motives underlying these depreciations were mainly of ethical but in part also of social origin. Among the great folk with whom Donne so much resorted and was always *persona grata*, to dabble in literature was

correct, to practise it for a livelihood unthinkable, for, to quote Edmund Gosse, " Poetry was no longer a profession, it was a *cultus*." * I do not imply that Donne was a snob in the same sense or degree as Congreve exhibited himself to Voltaire; but I think it probable that he was in this matter to some extent infected by the aristocratic attitude. From a critical point of view the question has a certain significance: it may afford a clue to Donne's toleration of many technical flaws in his own work, of which he could not but have been conscious. That he was capable of perfection we know—since he sometimes achieved it; but it was no matter of life or death to him to feel that a poem was as good as he could make it. Ben Jonson, who, you remember, thought Donne in some respects " the first poet in the world," and knew by heart the *Elegy on the Lost Bracelet* and a passage from the *Verse Letter on a Storm*, told William Drummond " that Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging." The metre of the *Satires* is extraordinarily harsh and irregular, but it is almost certain that this is due to deliberate imitation of the methods of the Roman Satirists, especially of Persius. It is, however, clear to me that Jonson was justified in his allegation, for Donne's poems are sprinkled with lines which if read naturally—that is, without forcible adaptation to the required metre—will shatter the rhythm of the passage or stanza in which they occur. If Donne's ear was not exactly obtuse, it was by no means fastidious. He could be and often was grandly musical, but he was hardly a great musician. And yet, when one remembers the incomparable élan of *An Anatomy of the World*, the impeccable rhythm of such lyrics as *The Prohibition*, *The Relic*, and the song beginning " Soul's joy, now I am gone," the sonorous melody of some of the *Divine Sonnets*, the " fine melancholy clang " of *The Lamentations of Jeremy*, one is tempted to revoke this verdict offhand. Read him, and judge for yourself.

The qualities which appealed to the author of *The*

* *From Shakespeare to Pope.* By Edmund Gosse, M.A. P. 25.

Alchemist were presumably the sinewy concreteness, the profusion of apt and vivid imagery in Donne's poems rather than that basic blend of Platonism and esoteric theology which relates them to such distinctly seventeenth-century mystics as Bishop King, Richard Crashaw, Henry More and Henry Vaughan. These were all born considerably later than Donne, who was a pioneer Caroline poet, just as Ben Jonson, his junior by a year, was a belated Elizabethan. Both, it is curious to reflect, were members of that cluster of poets, including Shakespeare, who foregathered at the Mermaid Tavern. Mr. H. J. Massingham in his Seventeenth Century Anthology calls attention to the preoccupation of the later Renaissance with death. "Life," he says, "is the passion of the age of Elizabeth; death, as a more mysterious life, the passion of the age of the first Stuarts. . . . But of this brotherhood with death come that fiery speculation and tranquil intensity of meditation which we call 'metaphysical' and whence has arisen all the talk about 'conceits.' . . . Donne, of course, who went on Essex's expedition and hardly belongs in date to the age at all, is the first seaman in these unmapped seas." * We know, indeed, that Ben was scandalised by Donne's *Anatomy of the World*, with its extravagant idealisation of a girl of "not fifteen" whom the author had never set eyes on, and its hyperbolical attribution of all the ills of humanity, present and prospective, to her untimely decease. "He told Mr. Done," says Drummond, "if it had been written of the Virgin Marie it had been something; to which he answered that he described the Idea of a Woman and not as she was." Precisely; but we remember, with some discomfort, that she was the daughter of Sir Robert Drury, the poet's munificent patron! Donne further excused himself by the suggestion that any lady who thought Mistress Drury unworthy of such exalted commendation should "make herself fit for all those praises in the book, and they shall be hers." Several of his Verse Letters,

* *A Treasury of Seventeenth Century English Verse.* Chosen and edited by H. J. Massingham. P. 351.

addressed to ladies of high rank, are hardly less extravagant in their attribution of celestial qualities than the *Anatomy :* and in one of them, deprecating any accusation that his praises are flatteries, he adds, in extenuation,

> If they were so, oft flatteries work as far
> As counsels and as far the endeavour raise.

These Verse Letters, of which thirty-four are included in the published works as edited by Mr. E. K. Chambers,* are upon the whole intermediate between the *Lyrics* and the *Divine Poems.* Lacking some of the passion of the former or the spiritual ardour of the latter, they gleam with brilliancy of wit and glow with splendour of intellectual imagination. Minor flaws of technique are negligible in comparison with such lavish beauties, for, as Mr. Massingham finely says, " Imaginative form is a metaphysic, as technique is not." One of the finest Verse Letters, addressed to the Countess of Bedford, ends with a stanza I cannot resist quoting :

> Go thither still ; go the same way you went ;
> Whoso would change do covet or repent ;
> Neither can reach you, great and innocent.

The two Verse Letters written to Christopher Brooke by Donne during his voyage with Essex, describing a violent Storm and the equally troublesome Calm which followed it, the latter so greatly admired by Jonson, are too long for quotation, but the following description of a whale in *The Progress of the Soul* may serve as a specimen of Donne's graphic vigour :

> At every stroke his brazen fins do take
> More circles in the broken sea they make
> Than cannons' voices when the air they tear.
> His ribs are pillars, and his high arch'd roof
> Of bark that blunts best steel is thunder-proof.
> Swim in him swallow'd dolphins without fear
> And feel no sides, as if his vast womb were
> Some inland sea ; and ever as he went

* *The Muses' Library.*

He spouted rivers up as if he meant
To join our seas with seas above the firmament.

This is one of the fifty-two stanzas of a satiric fragment written about 1601. It describes the migrations of a psychic entity which first inhabited the apple Eve pulled, then in turn a mandrake, a sparrow, a fish, a sea-pie, a whale, a mouse, and so on; and on reaching, through a woman, the human grade was destined to incarnate in a series of heretics, ending with Calvin. It should be compared with Prior's *Alma*, which describes the Progress of the Mind not from body to body but from one part of the human organism to another, from infancy to senile decay. Of the *Satires* proper I do not propose to say much; interesting as they are, they appeal now rather to the student than the lover of poetry. It is, however, worth while to call attention to the fact that *Satire III* reveals the writer, not more than twenty, already seriously preoccupied with doctrinal perplexities. Born and bred a Catholic, he is in doubt whether truth is to be found in the direction of Rome, Canterbury or Geneva. Contrasting the claims of the different religions, he exclaims—and the line will be familiar to many who have never seen its context—"He's not of none, nor worst, that seeks the best."

IV

Reverting to the *Anatomy* as upon the whole, apart from the lyrics (in which I include *The Ecstasy*), Donne's most outstanding poem, I am inclined to agree with Prof. Saintsbury that of its three sections, *The First Anniversary*, the *Funeral Elegy* and *The Second Anniversary*, the last is the most successful. But where all are so fine the comparison is a little invidious. Technically, one of the points of greatest interest is Donne's highly effective use of the repetend:

She, she is dead; she's dead; when thou know'st this
Thou know'st how poor a trifling thing man is,

or how ugly a monster, how wan a ghost, how dry a cinder, this world bereft of her beauty, charm and goodness. All three sections abound in superb lines, felicities, inspirations, clamouring for quotation; but many of them, as, for example, the lines beginning "her pure and eloquent blood," are already well known or have been repeatedly acclaimed by others. To convey some idea of the general quality of the poem, I prefer to quote a longer passage descriptive of the flight of the soul, a favourite of my own, truly, but one probably to be matched if not surpassed by available alternatives:

Think that a rusty piece, discharged, is flown
In pieces, and the bullet is his own,
And freely flies; this to thy soul allow.
Think thy shell broke, think thy soul hatch'd but now.
And think this slow-paced soul which late did cleave
To a body, and went but by the body's leave
Twenty perchance or thirty mile a day,
Dispatches in a minute all the way
'Twixt heaven and earth; she stays not in the air
To look what meteors there themselves prepare;
She carries no desire to know, nor sense
Whether th' air's middle region be intense;
For th' element of fire, she doth not know
Whether she passed by such a place or no;
She baits not at the moon, nor cares to try
Whether in that new world men live and die;
Venus retards her not to inquire how she
Can—being one star—Hesper and Vesper be;
He that charm'd Argus' eyes, sweet Mercury,
Works not on her, who now is grown all eye;
Who if she meet the body of the sun,
Goes through, not staying till his course be run;
Who finds in Mars his camp no corps of guard,
Nor is by Jove, nor by his father barr'd;
But ere she can consider how she went,
At once is at and through the firmament;
And as these stars were but so many beads
Strung on one string, speed undistinguish'd leads
Her through these spheres, as through the beads a string,
Whose quick succession makes it still one thing.

Well-nigh unique in poetry is Donne's combination in this and many more instances of swiftness and mass; the powerful steeds of his genius draw their ornate chariot with such unhampered ease that its immense weight is hardly noticeable. But many opposed influences must surely have been conjoined in Donne's horoscope, for, as sundry critics have remarked, the simultaneous or successive exhibition of antithetical attributes was of the very essence of his quality. The contrast between the Donne of the more licentious of the *Elegies* and *Lyrics* and the austere self-scourger of the *Litany* and *Holy Sonnets* is too obvious to need insistence, and has, of course, many parallels. But not only in separate poems of the same period but in separate stanzas of the same poem you shall find cynicism jostling tenderness, levity cheek by jowl with seriousness, the crudest sensualism confronted by the most exalted spirituality—each revealed with equal candour and equanimity, as the merest matter of course. "It was as if there was in him," writes Mr. Reginald Blunt, "almost to the very last, a dual personality, of which the worse and unworthier half, though ultimately subjugated, was never wholly exorcised." * He goes on to contrast the Donne of sundry questionable activities and sordid associations—*e.g.*, the annulment suit and remarriage of the Countess of Essex—with the Donne of Izaak Walton's beautiful and attractive picture, endorsing the conclusion of Mr. Gosse that, all said, the character of this splendid and obscure personality remains an inscrutable mystery. But as much may be said of even the least of us: inconsistency, or what so appears to our imperfect knowledge, is no monopoly of greatness, and "duality" is far too mild a term for the modes of its manifestation. Potentialities of good and evil, if not precisely counterpoised, are certainly not unrelated; the higher the oak towers into the sunlight the deeper its roots must burrow in darkness underground.

* *By Chelsea Reach.* By Reginald Blunt. Pp. 34–35.

V

In no section of Donne's poetical works is the contrast of moods and tendencies more startling than in the *Elegies*, which are, in the scale of comparative merit, second only to the *Lyrics*. They vary greatly in date: Some are evidently early; the beautiful *Autumnal* (No. IX), addressed, like *The Relique* and *The Primrose*, to Magdalen Herbert, mother of the poet, George Herbert, was written, Mr. Gosse thinks, as late as 1625, Donne's fifty-second and her fifty-seventh year. It must be confessed that some of the finest *Elegies* are in their outspoken sensuality calculated to shock the morally sensitive. No. XX, for example (*To his Mistress going to bed*), which Prof. Saintsbury calls "a piece of frank naturalism redeemed from coarseness by passion and poetic completeness." It is a fact which must be faced that æsthetic and accepted ethical standards do not necessarily coincide; that a great poem is not necessarily a "power for good" in the moral sense. This fact raises a philosophical question of immense interest. "It is," Coleridge inclined to believe, "a decided truth, though certainly an awful lesson, that nations are not the most happy when literature and the arts flourish most among them." * The Italian Renaissance, an era of great art, vivid personalities, immense literary and scientific activity, was, as we all know, also an age of hideous cruelty, lurid crime and bestial vice in high places. Francis Thompson in his wonderful poem *To the dead Cardinal*, comparing the austerities of the poet "stricken with curse of destinate verse," serving the "impitiable Dæmon, Beauty" without thought or hope of reward, to those of the saint, craves assurance that the former, "through sacrificial tears and anchoretic years," may not find himself at the last condemned to "tryst with the sensualist" in hell. If he, *par excellence* a religious poet, could harbour such misgivings, what of the secular poets and *their* "great desires"?

In Donne's *Divine Poems* the predominant note is an

* *Table Talk.*

intense, if not morbid, preoccupation with the fact and approach of death. Claude Phillips speaks of Titian's great *Pièta*, the picture on which he was engaged when at a very advanced age he was struck down by pestilence, as permeated with a religious awe " closely akin to terror." The same feeling, rather than true reverence, is perceptible in these poems, and found expression also in the somewhat macabre ante-mortem proceedings referred to in an earlier page, by which Donne almost desperately strove to familiarise his imagination with what he most feared. His nature was not, I repeat, even to the last, in any full sense reverent : in some of his most devotional verse one comes upon audacities reminiscent of those of his erotic youth. But there is a grandeur about many of these *Divine Poems* which I must not seem for a moment to depreciate. Perhaps finest of all is the series of *Sacred Sonnets* addressed to that Lady Herbert (afterwards Lady Danvers) who seems to dispute with his wife a claim to the deepest and most long-lived of his many loves. Everybody knows or should know the wonderful challenge to Death, beginning " Death, be not proud." But as an example of that strange, almost shocking familiarity of which Donne remained capable to the last, consider this reply to his own query as to the possibility of his damnation by " that tongue which pray'd forgiveness for His foes' fierce spite " :

> No, no ; but as in my idolatry
> I said to all my profane mistresses
> Beauty of pity, foulness only is
> A sign of rigour ; so I say to Thee,
> To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd,
> This beauteous form assumes a piteous mind.

Passion, power and originality are the three captain-jewels in Donne's poetic diadem. Neither of these qualities in the supreme degree in which he manifested them is favourable to popularity. The general reader prefers the mild sentiment, the facile fluency, the conventional thought of less masculine poets. Passion repels, power terrifies, originality offends and bewilders. Only

the most alert and athletic mind can follow without fatigue the flight of Donne's nimble fancy, in its quest of new images and bizarre similitudes. I have already intimated his failure to take himself in the poetic rôle as seriously as his genius warranted. He was no stickler for impeccability in rhyme or metre; no inexorable wooer of the unchallengeable word; no agoniser after perfection. Yet you shall not read far in any page of his verse without reward of arresting felicities; many of his shorter poems and many lines and passages in his longer ones triumphantly manifest that magical transubstantiation which differentiates real poetry from even the most accomplished literature.

CHARLES WHITBY.

HAWORTH MOOR

ON the Highway of Time
Troop six little shadows*
Trundling over
The intake meadows;
Six spirit childer
Seeking together
The Moorlands of Life
In the bleakest weather.
The sky is gray
With their questioning eyes,
How the curlew keens
And the lapwing cries! . . .
Into the arms of
The motherly mist
They all disappear
To be washed and kissed.

DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE.

* The Brontë children.

LONDON LYRICS:

I. LONDON

WOODS for April weather,
Downlands for the prime,
Moors for autumn heather—
London all the time!

Shops of fairy glitter,
Goblins in the street,
Draggled birds a-twitter,
Tramp of tired feet.

Flaming on the river
Drops the dying west.
London's arc-lights quiver,
Jewels on her breast.

Woe to youth that lingers,
Lured by rainbow gleams—
London's grubby fingers
Clutch at broken dreams.

ELEANOR RENARD.

II. OVER LONDON STREETS

BLACK roofs in jagged line
Disclose a shining stream of sky,
Up which the fair blue tide
Of Day comes surging loftily,
In billowing crests of cloud:
Then Night's dark river rises free,
With flash of silver fins
Where glistening shoals approach the sea.

PHYLLIS TAUNTON WOOD.

III. THE STREET OF DREAMS

ALL ye whose ears are open to hear the Pipes of Pan,
Who walk the ways of Faery, clean-hearted, unafraid,
Who spin the woof of Beauty to clothe your fellow-man,
Set up your loom in Fleet Street, the Street where Dreams are made.

The Poet and the Dreamer, the Beggar and the Fool
Who glimpsed the Vision Splendid,—a knightly throng and bold—
Have hung the walls with magic and made them beautiful,
Have glorified the hoardings and paved the ways with gold.

Yet phantoms walk in Fleet Street, the street of blood and tears,
They lurk in lonely byways where cold the starlight gleams,
Wrapped in a tattered mantle of withered hopes and prayers—
They wove the weft in Fleet Street, the Street of Broken Dreams.

When down those gleaming pavements, with gallant heart and strong
Rides Youth on steed of Faery, a-singing thro' the morn,
All ye who by your firesides shall read his golden song,
Send up a prayer for Fleet Street, the Street where dreams are born.

LUCY MALLESON.

IV. HEARD IN LONDON

LET us stay here and drink I say,
There's nothing more to do.
The horror of the breaking day
Has yet to filter through.

I'm old and broke at forty-four,
I've nothing fresh to learn,
It's all the same with rich or poor
Who've set their boats to burn.

And what's the use of fighting fate ?
Let's pass the bottle round
And warm our veins at any rate
Before we're under ground.

The rousing glow will seem like life
As I remember it,
When vital seemed the push and strife
(Just watch that old chap spit !)

I like the night, it's got more sense
Than silly giggling day,
It has some sort of recompense
For wounds life flings our way.

I think I once could care and feel ;
I'm sure I don't know how,
Surely I didn't pray and kneel ?
(Macpherson, stop that row !)

Here comes the fussy goading dawn
(Give me another drink)
Oh Christ, why ever were we born
With this cursed power to think.

MARGARET HUME.

V. THE ABSENTEE

THERE is a stillness where your feet
Made music once in leafy aisles,
And darkling shadows haunt the woods
That once were peopled with your smiles.

A thousand flow'rs that Spring conceived
Are come to birth on bough and stem ;
Shamefast, they tremble into life
And lack your voice to welcome them.

The primrose and the ladysmock
Watch for your coming, wistful-eyed ;
The fragile snowdrop breathed a small
Sweet prayer for you before she died.

The lonely hyacinth is bowed
With grief ; a mournful silence dwells
Upon his many-coloured spire
And heavy calm in all his bells.

Even the cheerful daisy hides
Amid her regiment of spears ;
The flaunting tulip bears aloft
Her painted chalice gemmed with tears.

It was but yesterday I saw
The crocus lift a golden head
To look for you—and who shall tell
The daffodil that you are fled ?

Oh, leave the barren pavements now
And shake their grey dust from your feet—
They cannot love you half so well
Nor yield you worship half so sweet

As these pure friends whose joy it is
To apprehend their own fair grace
In your slim body, and discern
Their lovely features in your face.

RACHAEL BATES.

VI. TRAFALGAR SQUARE

AGAINST a star strewn sky of deepest blue,
Grim buildings silent stand,
Their outline strikes a note of sombre grey,
A contrast to the gaily lighted Strand
Which filled with pulsing life runs close at hand.

Here the great Lions watch, immovable,
Their patient forms are silvered by the moon,
Their kindly eyes contemptuously fixed
Upon the pageant which must pass so soon,
The hurrying traffic, Man, his crowded hour,
It passes—they remain—a carven power.

PAULINE MARRIAN.

THE DAISIES

DEAR bright eyes that open early
With the tenderest touch of dawn,
Twinkling with the dewdrops pearly
On thy white lids backward drawn,
How thy shy sweet glances lighten
Lea and lawn.

Scarce as sweet the silvery veiling
Comes the evening sky to bless,
As these emerald grasses paleing
Into paths of loveliness,
Dusted with the stars of daisies
Numberless.

Earth hath nought more sweet and simple
Than these buds of purest ray,
That the golden meadows dimple
With the morning's milky way;
Was there e'er a poet's fancy
Flowed as gay—

Into lines of beauty rarer
Than these daisy chains have wrought,
Dancing to a music fairer
Than this wayside grass has caught,
Lifting on their wings of whiteness
All my thought!

Would my words were simple daisies
With the meadow green atwine,
Would my world of measured phrases
Broke to beauty as divine,
So I'd woo thee in a language
Rich as thine.

DUDLEY H. ANDERSON.

APOSTLES OF BEAUTY

IT is a serviceable coincidence that Sir William Watson's *A Hundred Poems* (Hodder, 10s. 6d. net) and Mr. Masefield's *Selected Poems* (Heinemann, 6s. net) have appeared more or less simultaneously, at all events sufficiently so for them to be linked together in a review without undue shuffling or manipulation, for it seems to me that in these two poets we find the two most opposite tendencies of modern poetic art at their best and sanest point. It cannot, therefore, be other than extremely profitable to the student of modern poetry to study these two books side by side, and to draw his conclusions not from one of them but from both.

The appeal of poetry is rather a matter of personal temperament than strictly of personal taste; taste can be guided, even revolutionised, but temperament cannot. A man either likes a certain type of poetry or he does not. It is not very probable, then, considering how different the work of Mr. Masefield is to that of Sir William Watson, that the lover of poetry will care, in his heart, for these two poets' work in equal degree; preference, in accordance with individual temperament, there is bound to be. But it is true to say, considering the varied excellencies of these two poets, that the lover of poetry *should* care in equal degree for the work of both of them—alas! an ideal of critical judgment not often likely to be realised, any more than in the case of Byron and Shelley, or Tennyson and Browning.

But, first, a word as to the editing of these two particular volumes; both books have been skilfully arranged and their contents properly chosen. If—as seems to have been the case—the editorial work was done by the poets themselves, then they are both to be congratulated on their self-judgment, which is a rare quality among poets in any generation, let alone this one. In Sir William Watson's case this quality is not to be noticed only in the selecting of his hundred poems, but also in their occasional revision. I have carefully collated the text of his poems as here presented with that of previous editions, and this is an occasion where a critic can whole-heartedly praise, for in every

instance the changes—sometimes slight, sometimes of larger moment—are for the better, even in passages which, previously, one had not thought capable of essential improvement. It would do every aspirant to the laurel definite good to study these alterations in Sir William Watson's text; in fact, the niceties of poetic technique could be learnt by so doing better than by any amount of assimilation of manuals professing to teach the laws and obligations of metre.

It is difficult to assess the true divergences, one from another, of these two poets. It is evident that the divergences are both thematic and æsthetic. To say that Sir William Watson wears singing robes of cloth of gold and Mr. Masefield those of homespun is to be only partially accurate; on the other hand, under those symbols one is able to indicate the difference of vesture affected by the modern muse as against that worn by her classical or Renaissance sisters. The muse wore cloth of old when she sang with Sophocles or with Petrarca, and her head was crowned with laurel; but when she sings to-day she is apt to be crowned with an unstylish hat and to wear a serge costume. Perhaps that would not matter so much if only she would not be so proud of it! However, that is meant to be general, not particular, and is addressed to others, not to Mr. Masefield, whose muse, even if in homespun (which is a beautiful and dignified cloth), is redeemed by the tears in her eyes.

The tears in her eyes! Perhaps there we have an essential point of difference between these two poets. It is not that Watson is classical and that Masefield is modern; to be classical is not to be inhuman, and to be modern is not necessarily to be human. But there is a certain aloofness about the art of Watson which, as a criticism of life, is a contrast to the intimacy with diurnal things in the art of Masefield. This, of course, has its inevitable reaction; Masefield does not write so well as Watson, his lines can be careless, his metre unsure, he has few lines that blaze, fewer still that have an organ note. Lines that blaze and lines of deep tone are curiously out of fashion; the

momentary critical temper is against them, and against them wrongly. Time, in this respect at least, will do Sir William Watson justice, for there is no living poet in England who can write more finely or more grandly. To dismiss writing of such a type as " rhetoric " is the fruit of inane ignorance ; more than once " in our island story " the bugbear of rhetoric has troubled critics. Shakespeare and Milton have not escaped the " soft impeachment," nor has the " soft impeachment " damaged either Shakespeare or Milton. It will, in the long run, damage no other poet. It is often the unconscious tribute to a verbal and metrical wealth that the critic, from his own impoverishment, is not in a position rightly to assess. Also, it is too often forgotten by the critical mind that the poet, of all artists, is perhaps the most instinctive in his craft, and that to write other than as he is instinctively prompted to do is to be untrue to his inspiration. This should never be forgotten in estimating style.

The work of both these poets is too well known for quotation to be necessary. Many of the poems of Watson and Masefield are on the lips and in the hearts of all who love poetry as poetry should be loved. And, as I have already endeavoured to point out, the appeal of their work will go hand in hand with the personal temperament of the reader. It is easy to see how Masefield has reached the larger audience, for his themes are often in narrative form, and he has an instinctive genius for telling a story well and vividly. But to tell a story well and vividly is not always to be consistently *poetical* in achievement, and, while gaining the suffrages of the many, the poet is in danger of losing some of the suffrages of the few. Masefield is rarely flawless, just as Watson is rarely of the earth ; it is not a question of values so much as of type. Watson attains his flawlessness by a certain elimination (necessary to his aim) of the sordid ; Masefield attains his humanity by a certain elimination (necessary likewise to his aim) of the grand. Let who will, and has the imprudence (if not the impudence), say that one is wrong and the other right. Each, knowing his own gifts, is surely right, and we are the gainer by having both.

Above all, William Watson and John Masefield have striven consistently after beauty, and beauty appears to all of us in different guise, because beauty is of no type but of all types. There is beauty in all things " had we the trick to see it," and these poets remind us, at one and the same time, of beauty's omnipresence, even as their styles, the modern as against the traditional (and I speak of that modern style which is legitimate and not that which is the bastard of incompetence), show us, at one and the same time also, that poetry, when it is sincere and inspired, is of no school and is the monopoly of no period.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

SCHOOL AGE

THE sun is shining on the hill
Where I must leave my child to-day,
To learn Thy work and do Thy will.
So may Thy face upon him shine,
Kind Master ; do not let him stray,
He is but young and tender still
And scarce to walk alone has skill.
Speed Thy small servant on his way,
My part is done, I must not stay.
Here ! take his little hand from mine
And hold it safelier in Thine.

'Midst toil and soil of bustling mart
Thou didst entrust him to my care ;
Now 'tis Thy will that I depart,
Thy treasure back to Thee I trust
To keep unblemished, pure and fair.
He will not need me where Thou art,
Yet, oh ! with what a troubled heart
I turn my back on his bright hair,
And to my lonely house repair,
Doing the joyless thing I must.
Forgive me, Sir, Thy will is just.

L. REEDLEY.

THE PILGRIM

FROM the seas beyond the setting sun
Where the white ships never sail,
To the land of the Commonplace came one
In quest of the Holy Grail;
He had sought it long in Immortal Spheres,
In mystical forests dim,
On mountains of longing, in mists of tears,
To the blue of the rainbow's rim.

He found in the land of the Commonplace
Beauty exceedingly fair;
Daily bread earned, a friend's dear face,
And the scent of the rain-washed air;
He lured them all to the rainbow's rim
With the songs that his journeys taught.
And he never knew in the heart of him
Was the light that he vainly sought.

JOHN F. CRANSTON.

A JAPANESE ARTIST, ELEVENTH CENTURY

ERE the dew was caught
By the sun from the flowers
And wisteria bowers,
The garden I sought,
While Spring birds sang,
I, Chao Chang.

From the branch I plucked
The pale purple trails
Whence the bee had sucked,
In how many tales
That I heard in my heart
The flowers took part.
This branch I would paint
As the gold day waned,
And the tulips grew faint.
My hands should be stained
With mixing pale hues
For the morning dews.

And this then is why
A delicate scent
To my drawing is lent,
That you yet may descry.
I have brought you the whole—
The flower and the prayer,
The dew and the air!
The pale blossom's soul. N. W. BYNG.

THE CHILDREN'S SPRING SONG

COME with us, and we will lead you
Where the kingcup-lamps are gleaming.
Come with us, and we will speed you
To the windflowers' silver-dreaming.
We know where the blackbird nested
(We have heard her foolish chiding).
We have seen King-wren, gold-crested,
In his moss-built palace hiding.
Come with us, for we can tell you
Where the painted orchids grow.
All Spring's secrets we can spell you,
For we tracked her, and we know.
Come with us, our footsteps follow
Through the folded meadow-lands,
Powdered thick o'er swell and hollow
With the dancing cowslip-bands;
All their fragrant tassels shaking
Down the sun-warm fields they flock,
Golden keys hung for our taking
April's casket to unlock.
Come with us, and we will show you
Where the misted bluebells spread;
Bluebell-seas to overflow you;
Bluebell-lakes to cool your tread.
Where the wild bee sips her chalice,
Swinging o'er that honeyed tide,
To Spring's azure-moated palace
Let the children be your guide.

EVA DOBELL.

BURNING-SHAME

(The way through a wood in Sussex, where tradition says that Saxons under Alfred fought with the Danes.)

WHEN you went down to Burning-Shame
The gossips winked behind you,
And grey-beard men spoke warning grim :
" Be sure your sin will find you ! "

When you went down through Burning-Shame
The forest closed behind you,
And bramble snares tripped up your feet ;
The sunlight could not find you.

The ways were mired by which you passed
To where the water waited
To quench the shame that burned your soul
While you and Life were mated ;

And where you thought to mate with Death
While lusty Life still held you,
Whose bonds you dreamed you might defy
When burning shame compelled you.

But Death cried, " Halt ! For here it was
" I met with stouter lovers
" When Saxons fought for hearth and kin
" Against the North Sea rovers.

" The White Horse neighed, the Raven croaked,
" The soil with blood was sodden
" When Honour bright and gladsome Life
" Beneath this earth were trodden.

" And hard it was such lives to gain,
" For hard men fought to hold them
" Before they bowed and laid themselves
" Where still mine arms enfold them.

" Where still their great unwilling hearts
" Lie quiet in my keeping,

" And still I watch above the dust
" Wherein they still are sleeping.

" Shall I who do such treasure hold
" Accept the gifts you proffer :
" The life you're fain to cast away,
" The burning shame you offer ? "

So you went up through Burning-Shame,
Though brambles tripped and tore you ;
You left the darkling woods behind,
And faced the light before you.

At gossips sly you winked again,
And answered to the sages :
" 'Tis I who've found out Sin's a cheat
" Who doesn't pay his wages."

Then turned your back on Burning-Shame,
To trudge the road above it
Till Death consents your life to take
When you have learned to love it.

MABEL HART.

DISILLUSION

I STOOD in Heaven at last and gravely scanned
Sad angel hosts, their fabled glory sped :
One placed a halo round my warrior head,
And cast beneath his feet the shining brand
Wherewith this hand had striven to purge a land
Sin-sick and vile, and sorrow-visited.
And now, alas ! another in my stead
Shall build the radiant city I had planned,
And win the high renown for which I fought !
I for eternity must lie and drowse
In halcyon fields, my soul ignobly sure,
Crowned with a misted circlet angel-wrought . . .
For *him* the tilt, the fight, the great carouse,
While I the turgid peace of Heaven endure.

WINIFRED N. JAMES.

THE SKILFUL TORTOISE

PERTINACITY and intrepidity, the qualities which Mr. Gosse praises in this author (*Carillons*, by M. Bartleet: Elkin Mathews, Ltd.), with a prefatory note by Edmund Gosse, C.B.), are rather a consolation than a pride. One lays the volume down with a feeling of disappointment. We may pass over, as mere carelessness, such grammatical mistakes as :—

"Didst thy fair youth for pleasant France repine?"; or "Great Goddess, who for young Adonis grieves, Thy swan-drawn chariot stoop. . . ."; or "Remorseless Fates . . . by thy decree . . ."; or "The webs are wove"; or such mispronunciations as that of rhyming the assenting affirmative Ay with lay.

No; what is far more important with these patterned verses is to take note of obtrusive marks of the chisel; and, alas, it is only too easy: there are mallet-marks as well. Redundant material, blatantly introduced to complete the jig-saw, cannot simultaneously be poetic material: "Dishes of porcelain large and small in size"; or "Thine image should be perfect and not maimed." And what shall we say to this: "The coachman snored, and dozed the horses cream, Nor could the dog have barked, the cat have purred." It is not even colloquialism; it is not language at all.

But the author of these infelicities has also written :—

> "And still betimes Pan takes his woodland way,
> There plays his pipe, and charms the sleeping year;
> There, loth to leave, his melodies delay—
> If any listen, echoes they may hear
> Soft as a flute,"

the lovely close of a Rondeau Redoublé which neither is a poem nor even sometimes quite makes sense. Yet the author insists on our regarding the whole as one unit.

We might feel that one who might win the Marathon is perversely obsessed with an uncongenial egg-and-spoon race; but the fate of the artificial verse-forms does not depend on this book. Otherwise we should inevitably and

permanently resign all damnéd iteration's artful aid, and the puns of the rondeau as well. No! We are aware that certain exercises in these forms have been transfigured into poems—by Gosse, Dobson, Lang, Henley, R. L. S., and Swinburne, to take only the names mentioned in this preface.

That this should happen at all is one of the miracles of Poetry. They are difficult enough in their original French home, but to write such verses in French is child's play as compared with writing them in English. The discount on spontaneity is immensely less. French rhyme is very unexacting. It is "the unique harmony of the lines," says Théodore de Banville, in the *Petit traité* to which Mr. Gosse refers. "The return of a sound at the end of a line" he calls it on another page. So in his rondel *Printemp*, his French ear is satisfied by two sets of identities where the English ear requires a constant change of initial consonant. The first set: -temps, -tants, -tants, -temps, -tangs, -tants, -temps; and the second: six repetitions of the syllable -rissent! Just so La Fontaine, one of De Banville's models, feels free to use, as a rhyme with amant, ten convenient samples of the enormous list of adverbs and abstract substantives ending in -ment.

That kind of thing will not do for us on this side of the Channel. Only a Byron dare rhyme dew with adieu, and that not too often. Consider, then, our difficulties. The chant royal, for instance, which should never be attempted save for a subject which the author conceives as demanding all attainable aids to dignity and grandeur, demands 10 *a* rhymes, 10 *b*, 10 *c*, 18 *d*, and 7 *e*; so that the author may not complete the seventh line of his first verse without first assuring himself of seventeen other words which will rhyme with it. What can the author do except take the advice of Boileau—which De Banville in idealist frenzy terms a "*précepte absurde*," and "put it back on the lathe, over and over again"?

How is it possible to write poetry under such conditions? Well, there is an analogy. One of the greatest discoveries of Sir Humphrey Davy was that it is impossible for the

sluggish flame of fire-damp, burning in air, to penetrate gauze or pass along a narrow channel. But there is no gauze invented that can stay the rush of the flame of hydrogen burning in oxygen. It is the heat of the flame that determines the result. So in the kingdom of Poetry. And here we may quote again, but with approval, from De Banville : " Where inspiration has expired, verse-making is no more than a game or an exercise." It is not, in any case, poetry. And the flower of a weak flame will not attain fruition in a chant royal which shall be a *poem.* S. Gertrude Ford, in her *Lessons in Verse-Craft*, so wrong-headed in many ways, but so convenient for reference, speaks of these exotic forms as " The Muses at Play." That is fundamentally wrong ; almost wicked. There is no games-room in the Temple of Poetry. " The atmosphere of Poetry is the hush of wonder."

OLIVER C. DE C. ELLIS.

TRYST

AS in a dream my essence goes
To where you are, and round you flows.

I am beside you : none can see,
And none beholds you welcome me.

I clasp you in my arms : none hears
The love I whisper in your ears.

My kiss upon your forehead glows,
And on your mouth : but no one knows.

Intangibly we touch, confer,
And to each other minister.

Then I return—and at the door
Your essence waits, arrived before !

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

SUMMARY JUDGMENT

CHRIST in the Strand, by James H. Roy, is the most refreshing of many new books of verse under our notice. The poem which gives the title to this small volume is both wonderful and weird and full of realism. It is a strong poem, strangely beautiful, yet told round a somewhat sordid theme. The characters are well drawn and the author's power of description is above the average. Mr. Roy pictures a low public house, off the Strand, peopled by racing men, tipsters, loafers, porters from Covent Garden, broken-down scholars, fallen women and others who are to be found in such a place. The story is pathetically and realistically told. Mr. Roy is a champion of the less fortunate of human beings ; his philosophy is both thoughtful and subtle. About the world he writes :—

> " And yet, this world God made
> Is very beautiful.
> Men hate to leave it, hate the thought of Death
> And going hence. He cannot better that.
> As Art, the world is God's great masterpiece.
> The air, the sky, the mountains and the plains,
> The scent of new turned earth and coilèd hay,
> The rain, the snow, all that delights the eye and ear,
> And makes Earth Paradise.
> And yet 't was this same God, who made
> The beasts of prey,
> And Nature, with its ruling principle of Kill,
> High as himself, yet lower than the beasts,
> Man, prostituting Reason, who has made
> Of Heaven a hell."

Mr. Roy sees the beauty of nature and the works of God and wonders why these blessings are wasted on so many. He understands the contrariness of nature, the positive and the negative values which interchange unceasingly. Such a poem shows us the connection between Poetry and Religion, mentioned by Thomas Hardy in the Introduction to his latest collection of verse, lately published, and reviewed in THE POETRY REVIEW.

Love Songs of Men and Women, by Erda Lang (Erskine Macdonald, 3s. 6d.), are full of love and pathos. They are somewhat reminiscent of Swinburne, to whom the author has dedicated a poem. These verses, although treating of love, are not sentimental in the mawkish sense. Beautiful thoughts are often expressed in beautiful lines.

Belfrage Gilbertson in *The Way of the Heart* (Erskine Macdonald) pleads for the forgotten and destitute children of the world.

> " Life has grown old for little souls :
> No shouts, no play.
> Grim hunger stalks the earth
> Rending in twain the living mould,
> Distorting beauty's gifts to hideous form,
> And maiming life."

She finishes with a prayer :

> " O Mother Heart dream, love !
> Lean out across this aching world
> And fold within Thy breast all fearful ones.
> Set free the healing waters of the mind
> That rise and flow
> And rest not till man's need is satisfied."

The Bridge of Memory, by Olive Primrose Downes (Stockwell), contains nothing but conventional and uninspired verse. The great majority of poems are sentimental and read like hymns.

Under the Red Lamp, by G. W. T. McGown (Lewis), contains songs addressed primarily to the angling fraternity. The author sings of Yarrow, mostly in Scots dialect. Many of the verses are picturesque and show the reader that Mr. McGown is a lover of nature as well as being a devoted angler. His verses to William Brims, a member of the B.R.L., who died in 1914, are genuinely poetical.

In *Songs at Eventide*, by Arthur Hunt (Routledge), are tuneful lyrics. *Awake my Love* is musical, but strangely and obviously reminiscent of a once famous song. Mr. Hunt's nature poems breathe the fragrance of the soil and his sonnets are above the average. He has much to say and he says it in a very definite way. *Immortality* is the best poem in the book, we have only the space to quote two verses, the first and the last.

> " Ah ! love, within the limits of a tomb
> In dreamless, painless sleep at rest you lie
> But whilst above your head the roses bloom
> You will not die."

> " Nor when her laughter shakes the happy tears
> From eyes that as the Summer skies are blue.
> All that you loved will live throughout the year
> And you'll live too."

Again we are confronted by a number of volumes of narrative

verse. *Ralf Rawdon*, by Rev. E. E. Bradford, D.D. (Kegan Paul), relates the story of a young man's life, beginning with childhood and ending with manhood. Mr. Bradford is a lover of boys and he has sought for his inspiration amongst them with great success. He exalts the love of man and man or man and boy over that of man and woman.

> " Men aren't so narrow as most women are ;
> But still I mustn't lay it on too thick.
> Some girls aren't bad ; but boys are better far.
> I find one gets fed up with girls so quick.
> They seem such babies, and it makes me sick
> To hear the way in which some fellows lie
> As if to save a girl a finger prick
> A noble English gentleman would die !
> That isn't *my* idea of knightly chivalry."

Later in the book the author criticises the Church of England.

> " That is the worst of our poor English Church,
> Our Bishops are so weak."

Mr. Bradford praises friendship in these beautiful words :

> . . . " If love has degrees
> In perfect friendship, as through life we wend
> The oldest friend in date stands highest in the end."

The story of *Ralf Rawdon* is told in simple, yet scholarly verse.

The Voyage of Ass, by E. H. W. Meyerstein (John Murray, 5s.), is somewhat after Piers Plowman, is told in a scholarly way, and breathes the atmosphere of Old London. The metre is musical and is admirably suited to the theme.

We have received *Five Poems* by Frederick Victor Branford, and *The Weaker Vessel*, a one-act play by George Blake, which belong to a series of Broadsheets published by the Porpoise Press. The writer of the play, obviously a disciple of Synge, has given himself little scope for originality, for he has chosen a threadbare theme. Then, with his tongue in his cheek, he suddenly makes the curtain fall before the end, but if he expects vociferous protests from readers or audiences he is likely to be disappointed. Even the man in the street would recognise bad art in this trick, a weak banality which destroys any interest that may have been aroused by the stock-in-trade characters of the usual triangle. But Mr. Branford's poems belong to a plane far higher than this play, and justify the enterprise of publishing these Broadsheets. He is not civilised away from

primitive forces, and instead of idly contemplating Nature, the poet thrusts his thoughts behind material exteriors, and amidst the darkness and wild music of the elements, this " battleground of life in death," he dimly perceives the ultimate destiny of the ego.

Look-See ! is an unfortunate name for the author, Miss M. J. Hamilton, to have chosen for her verse-booklet (Stockwell), for it is too suggestive of slangy doggerel. But the title gives no hint of the contents, which are more prepossessing than one is led to expect ; some of the poems deserve preservation in book form. Not so successful are *Songs of Fancy*, by E. P. Bennet (Stockwell), which are unconvincing and, save for the second verse of *The Flitter-Mouse*, fail to make any impression upon the reader beyond that of mild mediocrity.

In *Harp and Sickle* (Arrowsmith), by E. J. Watson, we are given promise of better things, for in spite of inartistic faults, such as wrong emphasis (as in " *her*self," " De*von*," etc.), there is real humanity in this book, and the writer gives sound counsel and good maxims to his readers. As some of the poems show that the writer has a sense of rhythm, it is obvious that he has not taken enough trouble in writing those that are more unsuccessful. For this reason *The Dawn of Salome* (from the Italian) misses being a beautiful poem.

Mr. Watson is better when not chafing under the exactions of rhyme, as in the interesting *Legend of the Graal*, a narrative showing imagination and thorough study of his subject, in which there are few lines that are clumsy.

Rupert Croft-Cooke, in his sketch, *Tonbridge School* (Tonbridge Free Press) is apt to fit any word into spaces where an artist would hesitate and search as industriously as the person who lost the piece of silver. But he has his own philosophy of school life, and what there is of the poem is not without interest. It can only be inexperience that allows a cliché like " dim vistas of the past " or a word like " bore " to rhyme with " poor."

Law and letters have not robbed G. Duncan Grey,* LL.D., of the secret riches of the spirit. Instead he proves them to be an abiding possession in the eloquent essays just published in a beautiful format by Arrowsmiths, of Bristol. The journey through life may be a descent from Jerusalem, the high city of splendid ideals and heroic enthusiasms, to the Jericho of the ordinary utilitarian world, but with Dr. Grey as guide we shall find beauty and wealth of

* Dr. Grey's name appears in the Honours List published on February 8th—the shortness of the list of new knights giving greater distinction to the honour, lately distributed so promiscuously.—Ed.

enduring quality by the way. He will be a comfortable companion, too, when, having done our Jericho business we are able to turn again to the hills of vision and follow the road that leads to the dwelling place of peace and the inn of tranquility. Dr. Grey writes poetry in prose as well as in verse, and we have no need to give a taste of his quality, for have not two of his charming essays, including his wise re-valuation of Matthew Arnold, which should be read and re-read at this moment, been published in THE POETRY REVIEW ?

Very little has been written concerning the life, customs and environment of the community of Catholics in Portuguese India, and for this reason *Lays of Goa*, by Joseph Furtado (Bombay) have an interest of their own. But the desire to find expression in English is not always successful. If the author were using his own medium these poems would probably have a natural freshness and beauty, but an imperfect knowledge of English idiom and the exact meanings of words spoils many of the verses which jar on the ear of an English reader.

A MEDIAEVAL CHILDE

HERE is Wilfred Rowland Childe's fifth book (*The Gothic Rose and Other Poems*, Blackwell, 5s. net), and, like *The Little City* and *Dream English*, it is a key that unlocks magic doorways through which we glimpse the glamour of the past. The author belongs to the world-old order of Beauty. One man may see Beauty shining far ahead on the future's horizon ; another may see Beauty in the twilit mists of the past, and it is to this order that Wilfred Rowland Childe belongs. Though a scholar-poet, he does not scorn to carry the rosy banner of childhood right up to the drawbridge of grown-up citadels ; he continues the bed-time fairy quest, and, instead of fiery dragons, he sings of " Our Lady of Montdragon " in

" the land of apple-trees
Of cherry trees and fleur-de-lys."

Instead of elfin counties, he tells of the " Faery Land of Shipscar," where

" The churches are white with praying, and the priests wear copes of gold,
And the princes go clad in scarlet, fold upon splendid fold,
And the youths have hair like daffodil in Shipscar over the wold."

He believes with Blake that " everything possible to be believed is an image of Truth."

If this book had been published in France, the French critics would doubtless have dubbed Childe a Parnassian—Imagist—Symbolist or something else equally wonderful, and it is true that he has something in common with all three schools, but in a few poems he infringes one of the most stringent Parnassian laws, a law which our own Parnassian, Elroy Flecker, has interpreted as " the elimination of the didactic tendency in poetry " : against a few poems—such as *The Dirge of Westminster*, *Lilium Regis*, *The Dead Kings*, and *The Lamentation*—might be brought the charge of didacticism, and we prefer infinitely to remember Childe by the ethereal delicacy of *Griselda*, the simplicity of *Nazareth*, the magicry of *The Harper of Finland*, the musical *Love Song of a Sailor*, the exquisite tenderness of *Holy Innocents*, the robustness of *Robbin Dick*, and *The Farm Labourer's Noel* and *Boslingcastle Bells*, both lovely as fifteenth-century carols.

" Golden ships, come home in the morning,
Boslingcastle bells,
Bring back lilies for Love's adorning
Boslingcastle bells,
God is born as a tiny child,
The Day-Spring in our hearts has smiled,
His Mother is a Maiden mild,
Boslingcastle bells.

. . . . .

" Come then, ye little children, and sing,
Boslingcastle bells,
Round this Rose-tree in a ring,
Boslingcastle bells,
Golden ships, come back and bring
Gifts for the Mother of our King,
And for her little Day-Spring,
Lord and Love of everything,
Boslingcastle bells."

We do not always like the introduction of such words as *vitraille*, *balas*, *galbanums*, *fenster-bars*, but there are so many felicities of phrase that it is impossible to dwell long on these slight blemishes, felicities such as :—

—" Venice, how she towers
Globed like a rosy pearl,"

" Through limestone runnels bubbling down
The babbling rivulets leave the hills."

" I dream of water under the bare-bosomed Night
Singing a song that never heard of Time."

" For there is in us northland blood
And tho' we yearn to roam,
One thing still keepeth most of good,
Which is, returning home."

Though the book is called *The Gothic Rose*, all the time that we were reading it we were haunted by Bartholomæus Anglicus' beautiful quaint description of the lily: " The lely is an herbe wyth a whyte floure and though the levys of the floure be whyte yet within shyneth the lykeness of golde." All through this book " shyneth the lykeness of golde." D. U. R.

THREE NEW BOOKS FROM THE SWAN PRESS.

THE inspiring genius of the Swan Press (Leeds) evidently had true vision when he launched his enterprise with those first little booklets of *Yorkshire Poetry* which, although the first volume has been but a few weeks completed, are already out of print and much sought after as literary rarities. They not only supplied an existing demand for Poetry in the industrial riding of the largest county but created a new one which has all the thrill of a new and important literary movement. Already the new Press has issued the first of a series of *Yorkshire Repertory Plays*, and its latest productions are three small books of which the simple, unostentatious elegance of style and printing alone may make an appeal to the book-lover.

The first of the three, Mr. Douglas Boyle's *Marcus Aurelius*, is a four-act play, written in blank verse (2s. 6d. net). The most remarkable thing about it is Mr. Boyle's courage in attempting a first play in such a medium as the highest and most difficult English verse-form, and although he cannot be said to have been superlatively successful there is about the achievement a distinction worthy of the most critical reader's interest.

There is a temptation in all but the best blank verse to feel that its employment is merely a device for adorning an otherwise " blank " tale, and it is curious that in a modern play, where the plot must of necessity be thick and the interests crowded, such a medium feels strangely out of place. This may be, however, because the poet's vision must be " stopped " (as the photographers say) from all interference of a too multitudinous detail before he can get that clarity of expression out of which a true song emerges. Mr. Boyle's characters have been dead long enough for him to be sufficiently

ignorant of their grosser personalities, but he has not been sufficient of a poet really adequately to call them to life again. Consequently there is not much action in the play: the parts are not what actors would call "fat," but there are one or two intensely dramatic points in the second and third acts which, in my opinion, would make the play worth producing. I hope that Mr. Boyle does look upon his work as a *play* and not merely a poem, for what is the use of fatuously calling a poem a play unless it is meant to be played. Although one feels the absence of any divine fire of transcendental thought, and is brought up sharply at times against snags of commonplace, there is a flexibility and spontaneity about Mr. Boyle's verse which makes his book an achievement at one and the same time noteworthy and praiseworthy.

The second book is *The Lute of Darkness*, by S. Matthewman (1s. net). I suppose there are fashions in titles as well as in everything else, and it would be a curious speculation to guess how many of the hundred-and-one writers who, since the first appearance of Mr. Cranmer-Byng's *Lute of Jade*, have written lutes of all sizes, materials and nationalities, have ever seen a lute or know what one sounds like. In Mr. Matthewman's new book, however, if the calling of a book a "lute" can be justified at all, I think there is more justification for the title than in most cases, for whenever I read any of his poetry I feel that here is one who has been given mastery over a perfect instrument, but who has not yet been sufficiently scorched by the divine flame to put that mastery to its fullest use. So the lute is a "Lute of Darkness," although I believe the author intends to convey by the title the slight undercurrent of sadness, if not of morbidity, which runs through most of the poems in this little collection. There are but ten poems all told in the book (this slimness is a feature of the Press), and although they are of irregular workmanship they all show signs of the skilled hand that fashioned them, whilst four at least stand out distinctly because of their sweetness of melody and purity of diction. It is these four beautiful poems which indicate how Mr. Matthewman's work as a poet has only just begun. They are *Poem Dedicatory*, *When You Are Out*, *To a Lady With a Mandoline* and *Barcarolle*. If I may quote, a verse each from the first poem and the last will show far more than any words of mine the value of this new poetry.

> "All songs are sung, yet with their old refrain,
> Still through the dark the sobbing lutes are ringing,
> And, if One love my songs, then not in vain,
> Though it be lost in silence, is my singing;

For, in a far day springing,
Some poet yet to be will sing these songs again."
(*Poem Dedicatory*).

"The water laps the languid oar,
Ripples and gurgles, croons and sings;
Low through the dusk, a troubadour
Murmurs his love to muted strings."
(*Barcarolle*).

A uniform volume with *The Lute of Darkness* is the Swan Press reprint of *The Forsaken Merman* delightfully illustrated by Violet Dinsdale. A poetess herself, Miss Dinsdale has been singularly happy in illustrating what is, perhaps, the best of Matthew Arnold's poems. Her skilful handling of the nude is seen at its best in her pictures of the mer-children, especially the sobbing little mite at the end, and the book should prove to be a splendidly appropriate souvenir of the Matthew Arnold Centenary. Miss Dinsdale is also responsible for the label for *The Lute of Darkness* as well as the illustrations in Mr. Douglas Boyle's play. Apart from the doubt as to the desirability of illustrating a play at all, we feel that Miss Dinsdale has not been so happy in this latter effort, although the detail work is good and the arrangement of a crowded scene in the first picture is as clever as it is quaint.

T. W. M.

* * * *

Mr. Morland pays attention to the type, binding and general appearance of the many small volumes of verse published by him, but we are afraid that the general contents too often are not worthy of the attention given to their production. *Nature Poems*, by Elinora Clarke, is the most promising of recent volumes received, for the verses reflect thoroughly enjoyed experiences of outdoor life, and are not manufactured impressions. Gladys Austin's *Poems* contain some brightly written verses, but too much repetition of idea and phrase. At the best, Mary Drinkwater's work in her *Poems* is merely insipid verse, and we regret that we can find nothing deserving particular comment in *Songs of Solitude*, by Ralph Inchbald, or in *Poems*, by Marjorie D. Turner. One or two of Judith Brundrett Tweedale's *Verses for Children* take form, in spite of her inclination to write doggerel, and show a gaiety and keen observation of nature.

MATTHEW ARNOLD AND THE FORMATIVE INFLUENCE OF POETRY.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

SIR,—Immediately after reading Mr. Walbrook's gratifying recognition of the formative influence of Matthew Arnold—a warmer, more human tribute than any other I have seen in these days of cold and feeble machine-made "appreciations"—I looked up a series of reports on elementary schools and training colleges, written by Matthew Arnold during a most important thirty years. I believe these valuable contributions to the literature of education—perhaps the finest, most suggestive and inspiring literary documents presented to and published by the Board of Education—are indexed in your important and comprehensive bibliography as published by the great educational firm of Macmillan in 1889, but as it is not likely that many of your readers are familiar with them, it would be pertinent and useful to quote what Arnold, the School Inspector, said in these reports on the use and formative influence of poetry. You will, perhaps, agree with me that it is an agreeable and stimulating duty to re-present these opinions and advice of the spiritual father of the Poetry Society, whose exhortation to seek "a clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it" has been our steadfast rule. One most desirable effect of the centenary should be increased concerted effort to apply Matthew Arnold's policy—less individual talk and more combined, directed practice.

The greater part of Arnold's General Report for 1878 is devoted to a pronouncement on the formative power of poetry:

"Learning by heart is often called, disparagingly, learning *by rote*, and is treated as an old-fashioned, unintelligent exercise, and a waste of time. It is an exercise to which I attach great value, and it tends, I am glad to say, to become general in the schools of my district, partly, perhaps, because the teachers know that I am strongly in favour of it. Poetry is almost always taken for this exercise, not prose; and when so little is done in the way of learning by heart, poetry should certainly have the preference. The pass in reading might, I think, with advantage be relieved of that condition requiring the scholar to have also learnt passages by heart, which at present in the two highest standards complicates it. Then recitation would probably be almost universally taken up in our schools. That is to say, in almost all inspected schools, in my district at any rate, the whole upper part of the school would each year learn by heart from one to three hundred lines of good poetry.

" The advantage of this seems to me indisputable. If we consider it, the bulk of the secular instruction given in our elementary schools has nothing of that formative character which in education is demanded. As regards sewing, calculating, writing, spelling, this is evident. They are necessary, they have utility, but they are not formative. To have the power of reading is not in itself formative. It is necessary to have it, and here is the defence of our promiscuous reading books and of allowing them all to be used freely ; the power of reading has to be acquired by the pupil, and for acquiring the power of reading it must be owned that our reading books, with the promiscuous variety of their contents, serve well enough. But for a higher purpose, to serve in any way to form the pupil in addition to giving him the mere power of reading, no serious person would maintain that our reading books are at present fitted.

" But good poetry is formative ; it has, too, the precious power of acting by itself and in a way managed by nature, not through the instrumentality of that somewhat terrible character, the scientific educator. I believe that even the rhythm and diction of good poetry are capable of exercising some formative effect, even though the sense be imperfectly understood. But, of course, the good of poetry is not really got unless the sense of the words is known. And more and more I find it learnt and known; more and more it will be easy to refuse to let the recitation count for anything unless the meaning of what is recited is thoroughly learnt and known. It will be observed that thus we are remedying what I have noticed as the signal mental defect of our school children—their almost incredible scantiness of vocabulary. We enlarge their vocabulary, and with their vocabulary their circle of ideas. At the same time we bring them under the formative influence of really good literature, really good poetry. We must not, of course, be so rigid as to exclude all poetry but the very best. Poetry like that of Scott or Mrs. Hemans, for instance, is no doubt of texture different from that of the best poetry, yet it has excellent qualities, and qualities to which our school children are very sensible ; we may be glad to have them learning it. Still an effort should be made, for this one exercise, to fix the standard high. Gray's *Elegy* and extracts from Shakespeare should be chosen in preference to the poetry of Scott and Mrs. Hemans, and very much of the poetry in our present school reading books should be entirely rejected."

Arnold returned to the subject in 1880, and has something to say on the choice of selections, which your authorities who have drawn attention to this particular matter at Poetry Society examinations in the Art of Speaking Verse—perhaps the wisest work now being

carried on by an extra-educational body—have confirmed. You have joined forces with Arnold in insisting that the central purchase for the opening of the soul and the imagination should be found in the poetry learned for recitation which is absorbed into the child's individuality.

" I find that of the specific subjects English Literature, as it is too ambitiously called—in plain truth the learning by heart and reciting of a hundred lines or two of standard English poetry—continues to be by far the most popular. I rejoice to find it so ; there is no fact coming under my observation in the working of our elementary schools which gives me so much satisfaction. The acquisition of good poetry is a discipline which works deeper than any other discipline in the range of work of our schools ; more than any other, too, it works of itself, is independent of the school teacher, and cannot be spoiled by pedantry and injudiciousness on his part. Some people regard this my high estimate of the value of poetry in education with suspicion and displeasure. Perhaps they may accept the testimony of Wordsworth with less suspicion than mine. Wordsworth says, ' To be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God.' And it is only through acquaintance with poetry, and with good poetry, that this ' feeling of poetry ' can be given.

" Good poetry does undoubtedly tend to form the soul and character ; it tends to beget a love of beauty and of truth in alliance together, it suggests, however indirectly, high and noble principles of action, and it inspires the emotion so helpful in making principles operative. Hence its extreme importance to all of us ; but in our elementary schools its importance seems to me to be at present quite extraordinary. I hope that, instead of its being confined to children in the fifth and sixth standards, this excellent discipline of poetry will be retained for the children of the fourth standard, and brought into use universally for at least these three standards.

" Happily, the poetry exercise has, as I have said already, become popular in schools, and it will, I am confident, become more and more so. Sir John Lubbock says that in some board schools in Lambeth he asked the children which they preferred of four of their subjects of instruction—grammar, history, geography, and elementary science—and that a very large majority were in favour of elementary science. I do not quite understand how he took his comparison ; he does not mention whether the children whose votes he took were all of them learning all these four subjects or not. But, at any rate, if he will come into Westminster and will ask the children

in the schools there who are taking two class subjects and two specific subjects, poetry being one of these latter, which of the four they prefer, I think I can assure him that he will find a most decisive majority for poetry.

"The choice of passages to be learnt is of the utmost importance, and requires close and intelligent observing of the children. Some years ago it was the fashion to make them learn Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, at the recommendation, I believe, of the late Lord Lyndhurst, or rather, he had given high praise to this poem, and recommended it as a poem to be got by heart, and so it was supposed that the children in our elementary schools might with advantage learn it. Nothing could be more completely unsuitable for them, and this being soon proved by the event, the use of the poem for the purpose in question has happily almost ceased. That the poetry chosen should have real beauties of expression and feeling, that these beauties should be such as the children's hearts and minds can lay hold of, and that a distinct point or centre of beauty and interest should occur within the limits of the passage learnt, all these are conditions to be insisted upon. Some of the short pieces by Mrs. Hemans, such as *The Graves of a Household*, *The Homes of England*, *The Better Land*, are to be recommended, because they fulfil all three conditions; they have real merits of expression and sentiment; the merits are such as the children can feel, and the centre of interest, these pieces being so short, necessarily occurs within the limits of what is learnt. On the other hand, in extracts taken from Scott and Shakespeare, the point of interest is often not reached within the hundred lines which is all that children in the fourth standard learn. The judgment scene in the *Merchant of Venice* affords me a good example of what I mean. Taken as a whole, this famous scene has, I need not say, great power; it is dramatic poetry of the first order, it is also well within our school children's comprehension, and very interesting to them. Teachers are fond of selecting it to be learnt by heart, and they are quite right. But what happens is this. The children in the fourth standard begin at the beginning, and stop at the end of 100 lines; now, the children in the fourth standard are often a majority of the children learning poetry, and this is all their poetry for the year. But within these hundred lines the real interest of the situation is not reached, neither do they contain any poetry of signal beauty and effectiveness. How little, therefore, has the poetry exercise been made to do for these children, many of whom will leave school at once, and learn no more poetry! The conclusion I wish to draw is, that the teacher should always take care that the year's poetry of a

class shall contain the best poetry in the piece chosen for them, and the central point of interest in it; not be mere prelude and introduction to this centre of interest. To secure this, the teacher may without scruple plunge into the middle of a scene or passage, and make his children take their 100 lines there, explaining to them, of course, the situation at the point where they begin. If they remain another year, they can take a new passage or scene under the same conditions. This is a far better course than to throw a year away, as is frequently done now, upon comparatively ineffective poetry, with the intention that the child, if he remains at school, may next year continue the same passage and reach the point of interest.

"I insist at such length upon this poetry exercise, because of the increasing use of it, and because of its extreme importance. Stress is laid upon the necessity of the children knowing thoroughly the meaning of what they recite, and it is assumed that to secure their knowing this is the simplest matter in the world, and that not to secure it proves inexcusable negligence in the teacher. I am more and more refusing to pass children who do not know the meaning of words which occur in what they recite, but I proceed gradually and with caution. If I had begun by rigidly rejecting every child ignorant of the meaning of every word in what he recited, I should never have got the poetry exercise established in my schools at all. The scanty vocabulary of our school children, and their correspondent narrow range of ideas, must be known and allowed for if one is to guide their instruction usefully. I have found in London schools children of twelve years old able to pass well in reading, writing, and arithmetic, who yet did not know what 'a steed' was. I found in a good school the other day a head class of some thirty, only one of whom knew what 'a ford' was. 'Steed' is a literary word, 'ford' is a word of country life, not of town life; still they are words, one is apt to think, universally understood by every one above five years old. But even common words of this kind are not universally understood by the children with whom we deal. Very many words are in their reading lessons passed over as certainly known to them, to which they attach no meaning at all, or a wrong one. The poetry exercise is invaluable by causing words to be dwelt upon and canvassed, by leading the children to grasp the meaning of new words, and by thus extending the range of their ideas. But the slowness and difficulty of the process, which are as incontestable as its high value, must be borne in mind, and we must have patience with that slowness and difficulty."

Poetry as a relief from more mechanical exercises and as a creative effort was emphasized in 1882 by Arnold, who was fond of quoting Butler's dictum that "of education information itself is really the least part."

"Of such high importance, in relieving the strain of mental effort, is the sense of pleasurable activity and of creation. Of course, a great deal of the work in elementary schools must necessarily be of a mechanical kind. But whatever introduces any sort of creative activity to relieve the passive reception of knowledge is valuable. The kindergarten exercises are useful for this reason, the management of tools is useful, drawing is useful, singing is useful. The poetry exercise, if properly managed, is of very great use, and this is why I have always been in favour of it and am glad to see further development given to it by the New Code. People talk contemptuously of 'learning lines by heart'; but if a child is brought, as he easily can be brought, to *throw himself into* a piece of poetry, an exercise of creative activity has been set up in him quite different from the effort of learning a list of words to spell, or a list of flesh-making and heat-giving foods, or a list of capes and bays, or a list of reigns and battles, and capable of greatly relieving the strain from learning these and of affording a lively pleasure. It is true, language, and geography, and history, and the elements of natural science, are all capable of being taught in a less mechanical and more interesting manner than that in which they are commonly taught now; they may be so taught as to call forth pleasurable activity in the pupil. But those disciplines are especially valuable which call this activity forth most surely and directly."

Time and again Arnold dwells on the importance of only good models being used in the poetry lessons. As early as 1867 he was calling attention to the poor quality of the poetry in the reading books then in use—"the choice of poetry in these books is especially bad." He printed "a specimen of popular poetry from the fifth standard book of a series much in vogue." The two verses I quote from *My Native Land* are not so surprisingly bad for the taste of fifty years ago when compared with somewhat similar lines by a present-day "authority" [*sic*] on poetry, who exclaims in fervid verse, "Oh, the long lanes of England, please my heart and fancy so":—

"She is a rich and rare land
Oh, she is a fresh and fair land,
She is a dear and rare land,
This native land of ours.

" She's not a dull or cold land,
No, she's a warm and bold land,
Oh, she's a true and old land,
This native land of mine."

Arnold adds, " When one thinks how noble and admirable a thing genuine popular poetry is, it is provoking to think that such rubbish as this should be palmed off on a poor child for it with any apparent sanction from the Education Department and its grants."

May these words of Matthew Arnold and the Poetry Society's practical application of them provoke the interest, appreciation, comment and discussion they deserve.—Yours, etc.,

LEONARD KNIGHT.

London, W. January 17th, 1923.

NONSENSE PARODIES.

A Fascinating Suggestion for Readers' Entertainment.

To the Editor of The Poetry Review.

Sir,—The letter of the Burma lady on " Prose Poetry " and your comments thereon were admirable. I hope teachers of English will relieve their dull lessons by making them the basis of a fascinating inquiry that would stimulate the mentality of their students. May I, in turn, as you ask for suggestions for competitions and contributions, put forward an idea that would help to irrigate the aridity and dull solemnity of present-day prose, which lacks both lightness and eloquence ? As

A little nonsense now and then
Is good for poets and lesser men,

why not invite your readers to submit nonsense parodies ? Even the most learned of them in poetic lore might indulge in the game. " None but a man of extraordinary talent can write first-rate nonsense," said De Quincey—an encouraging remark unless we are very humble. Although the application of it is my own idea, this suggestion has been inspired by an article in a *Harper's Magazine*, from which I lift a few illustrative examples.

" Listen to Algernon Charles Swinburne escaping from the slavery of dull poetic sense :

" ' From the depth of the dreamy decline of the dawn through a
notable nimbus of nebulous noonshine,
Pallid and pink as the palm of the flag-flower that flickers with
fear of the flies as they float,
Are they looks of our lovers that lustrously lean from a marvel of
mystic miraculous moonshine,
These we feel in the blood of our blushes that thicken and threaten
with sobs from the throat ? '

" And hear Bishop Corbet escaping from theology in the seventeenth century :

" ' Like to the fiery tombstone of a cabbage,
Or like a crab-louse with its bag and baggage,
Or like the four-square circle of a ring,
Or like to hey ding, ding-a, ding-a, ding ;
E'en such is he who spake, and yet, no doubt,
Spake to small purpose, when his tongue was out.'

" To quote Tom Hood :

" ' I never nursed a dear gazelle,
To glad me with its dappled hide,
But when it came to know me well
It fell upon the buttered side.' "

C. B. Loomis has a pertinent query affecting nonsense in lines that seem to burlesque the vague profundity of much of your " Georgian " verse which your fashionable ladies find " so clever, and deep and beautiful " :

" ' What is it that I mean,
Oh, potent soul of mine ?
Oh, ecstasy divine
In luscious meadows green !

" ' When from the void of things
(What is it that I mean ?)
I sense the joys unseen
And memory backward flings ;

" ' When I encounter doubt
And flee th' unquiet scene—
(What is it that I mean ?)
Friend, hast thou found me out ?

" ' A charnel-house at e'en,
A dusky, reddened sky,
A tomb where none is nigh—
(What IS it that I mean ?) ' "

Will your readers take a hand in the game by supplying some original burlesques ?—Yours,

CORNELIUS B. HUGHES.

New York. January 20th.

SONG OF THE SCHOOLBOY AT CHRISTMAS.

(Latter Part of the Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century.)

To the Editor of The Poetry Review.

Sir,—Some few years ago when collecting material for a little book (*The Natural History of the Child*) I came across the enclosed verse. I endeavoured to make a translation of it, but, alas ! my scholarship failed me ; then I appealed first to one, and then to another eminent Latin authority. It was very unfortunate none of them refused advice, and quite a lot sometimes, but no one, until I came to Dr. Rouse of Cambridge, had sufficient courage to attempt a translation.

As a matter of fact, the verse is such bad mediæval Latin that one gentleman of my acquaintance had a suspicion that the author was the person who pens these lines; that is not so, but who is, or where I unearthed it, I have not the faintest idea.

May I say that I consider the poem a curiosity, and not intended as an example of versification desirable to follow.—I am, etc.,

C. F. W. COURTENAY-DUNN.

Fairview, Torquay.

Song of the Schoolboy at Christmas.

(*Latter Part of the Fifteenth or Early Part of the Sixteenth Century.*)

Antefinem termini Baculus portamus,
Caput hustiarii ffrangere debemus ;
Si Preceptor nos petit quo debemus Ire,
Breiuter respondemus " non est tibi scire,"
O pro nobilis docter, Now we youe pray,
Vt velitis concedere to gyff hus leff to play,

Nunc proponimus Ire, without any ney,
Scolam dissolvere; I telle itt youe in fey,
Dieut istud festum, merth-is for to make,
Accipimus nostram diem, owr leve for to take
Post natale festum full sor shall we qwake,
Quum nos Revenimus, latens for to make,
Ego nos Rogamus, hartly and holle,
Vt isto die possimus, to brek up the scole.

[*Translation.*]

Before the end of term we carry sticks
We must break the porter's head.
If the master asks us where we should go,
We briefly answer, It is not yours to know,
Oh noble Doctor, now we you pray
That you may grant to give us leave to play,
Now we propose to go without any nay,
So break up the school, I tell it you in faith
On this feast is to make mirth
We take our day our leave to take
After the feast of the Birth (of Christ) full
sore shall we quake
When we come back for to make Latin.
Therefore we ask heartily and wholly
That this day we may be able to break up the
School.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT:

Simplicity Without Banality.

MANY competitors have aimed at simplicity this month, and it is satisfactory to see that they have generally avoided garrulous outpourings of unreal emotion or wordy but dull contemplation of the abstract. When the poem *God Called me Early* (by the winner of the first prize) is published, readers will see the kind of simplicity we want; they are advised to study its artless and apparently effortless style. This time some of the unsuccessful have chosen a wrong metre for their subjects, using sonnet forms for light and gay themes, or quick lilting measures for weightier thoughts. Those who attempt fairy poetry may let their fancy wander freely, but they should beware of mere silliness. Clever nonsense is entertaining, but weak nonsense is boring in the extreme. Another

writer sends a rather feeble and unconvincing account of a murder (in the first person). It is written with too much facility, and in it there is no intensity of conception or illusion of reality. We put aside at once all attempts in which the writer (again in the first person) pensively looked out of the window and saw a lonely star, and after a series of pessimistic but obvious remarks ended with a line such as "When You are gone for ever from my side," or "Because You are not here." But although there were not many poems of striking distinction or interest we did not receive as much "sludge" as we have sometimes done for this competition.

Again we divide the Premium, awarding 10s. 6d. to Molly Young (Pickering), whose poem of freshness and simplicity, free from the usual banal treatment of such a subject, can be truly called a lyric. We allot the remainder to E. M. Frampton (Winchester), who carries out an idea well in her sonnet, *In Defence*; F. A. Carter (Kirkburton), for a realistic poem, *Early Spring in a Shovel Works*; Muriel E. Graham (Stirling), for a description of sunrise after a long November night; and Robert Crawford, the miner poet whose work we have published before, for his imaginative poem, *A Wind of Stars*. Other writers deserving special mention, and to whom the usual book acknowledgments are awarded, are: M. O. Baynes (London), who brings into both her poems a feeling of mystery and wonder; Evelyn D. Bangay (Auckland), in whose poem *A Reaper* the images are strong, but the last two lines should have come less abruptly; "C. L." (West Ealing), for a water-colour sketch of the Thames; Joy Malden (Southern Cross), for her ghostly *Night Thoughts on the Down*; Blanche Jones (Margate), whose pictures in the fire are graphically painted, and S. M. Goode (West Croydon), whose poem, *The Wayfarer*, has the rare combination of interest and simplicity.

We also commend: E. P. Gill (St. Germans), M. E. Rotton (London), Editha Jenkinson (Scarborough), L. Reedley (Burnley), E. Stella Mead (Bucks), "Dandylion" (Alton), Martin Shrobyng (Gillingham), Eric C. French (Margate), Cyril G. Taylor (Teignmouth), F. G. Edwards (Kelvedon), Minna R. Dowson (Margate), Helen E. Holland (Hampstead), Lettie Cole (Pontrilas), Lilian Bird (Kettering).

Liverpool Poems.

We have made an interim award of the £2 2s. offered for the best poems by the best poem by a Liverpool writer—a Liverpudlian by birth or residence—and divide the prize between Rachael Bates and Florence Bone, and we carry forward the £2 2s. offered to date for

the best poem with some phase of Liverpool life as its subject, which, with the £2 2s. accruing this month under the terms in the December issue, make a balance of £4 4s. still to be awarded. This amount will be divided between poems on Liverpool subjects and poems by writers associated by birth or residence with Liverpool. The poems already received will still be taken into consideration, and we hope to have, before making the final award, some further distinctive examples, and more worthy work. A Liverpool laureate has not been found yet, and we have been disappointed in not receiving more verse from Liverpudlians now living far away from their native city, or from general contributors able to describe in verse some aspect of Liverpool life. The subject poems are obviously not limited to writers living in the immediate district. Anybody anywhere has this opportunity, which should also suit those whose medium is descriptive free verse.

Bristol Poems.

As no other outstanding poem has been received from Bristol-born contributors we award Mr. Watson's premium of £2 2s. to J. W. Norgrove, a member of the Bristol Fellowship, for his lines *When Men are Gone*. Both of his poems escape from being hackneyed or dull, and have distinction; we have chosen the shorter of the two. Rex F. Hopes, Petronella O'Donnell, Francis Furber Garland and Phyllis Hastings are to be commended for well-written verses.

Prose Articles and Criticism.

We have had very few individual and pertinent notes or reviews or short articles, the best of these being a study of Beatrice Mayor by Walter K. Lewis. Our offer for a short prose article is repeated, and full particulars of this competition will be found in the last issue of THE POETRY REVIEW.

PREMIUM AWARDS AND CRITICISM REGULATIONS.

The usual general premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued, and six books will be awarded to the "highly commended."

In addition, special premiums of four guineas (see announcements above) are still being offered with special reference to Liverpool in place of the recent special London poems allocation of a portion of the general premium. Book prizes also are offered for prose articles and for lists of London Lyrics and the best occasional poems

of the month. The following general conditions apply to all the competitions :—

Not more than *two* poems may be submitted at the same time.

Every entry must be certified as original and as not having appeared in print, and the name and address of the competitor must be attached to the MS.

If criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. and a stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed. (If a more detailed postal criticism is desired, 5s. and a stamped addressed envelope should be sent.)

Entries must be either typewritten or written in ink on one side of the paper only, and contributors who are not members of the Poetry Society or registered postal subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW must enclose as a coupon the imprint (" Printed by," etc.) cut from the back page of the cover of the current issue.

All MSS. submitted for premium awards should be addressed to " The Premium Editor," and should reach this office *not later than* April 1st. Entries cannot be returned, but they must remain at the disposal of the Editor (whether awarded a premium or not) until after the issue of the next number of THE POETRY REVIEW, in which the award will be published, and they may be published in THE POETRY REVIEW or elsewhere at the Editor's option.

* * * *

We so frequently receive inquiries about books concerning verse and verse-writing that we give below a list of manuals on the subject, which we hope may be found a service and guide to a considerable number of writers.

The Art of Writing Verse, by Editha Jenkinson (Erskine Macdonald, 2s. 6d.), which is concise, simply written, and easily understood.

The Writing and Reading of Verse, by C. E. Andrews (Appleton, 1918), a comprehensive and exhaustive study of every form of verse, including Artificial and Free Verse, with many examples.

The Principles of English Versification, by Paull Franklin Baum (Oxford University Press, 1922, 10s. 6d.). An interesting and thorough treatise with illuminating comments upon rhythm, melody, harmony and modulation. Free and Exotic Verse are also dealt with.

Verse Writing, by W. H. Carruth (Macmillan, New York, 1917), $1·80. A practical handbook treating in particular metrical form, and including exercises for students of versification.

The Measures of the Poets, by M. A. Bayfield (Cambridge University Press), 1919. A scholarly and intelligible treatise on metrical form.

An Introduction to Poetry, by J. B. Hubbell and J. O. Beaty,

Professors of English in Southern Methodist University, U.S.A. (Macmillan, 1922, 12s.). A sound comprehensive study, but more particularly suitable for the intelligent reader.

CHIHA: A SINDIAN WARBLER

Although not equal in fancy and expression to *The Heavenly Harvest Fields*, this new poem by Mrs. Kazi has particular charm and freshness. In smooth, natural metre, it conveys the characteristics of the Indian or rather Upper Sind landscape, and expresses a comfortable sentiment that prevails in the East, beneath the apparent unrest, that the spirit of patience, in spite of all threatening things, despite all gloom and trouble, maintain its quiet cheerfulness and faith.

The little "Chiha" in the tree,
Its love-note will repeat,
'Tis but a simple see! see!! see!!!
And still it sounds so sweet.
The cricket in the shrub replies;
The water wheel complains and sighs;
Afar the startled partridge cries;
The evening spreads her dusky wings,
And still the little warbler sings
Its ditty of delight.

The rocking leafy twig it quits,
For here's the hooting owl!
The soundless bat like spectre flits
And weirdly jackals howl.
The eve her pearls in cob-webs keeps;
From hollow tree a weasel leaps;
The impish chill from thickets creeps;
The night her gloomy mantle flings,
And still the tender warble rings:
See! see!! the world is bright.

Thou sprightly minstrel of the plain,
Thy song is only lulled
When stars abound; and wakes again
When dawn the stars hath culled.
Thou sylph that gleans forgotten smiles;
Thou dream that hate with love beguiles;
Thou thought that mirth on sorrow piles;
Thou echo of ethereal things;
Thou mood that mood of heaven brings;
Thou darling bird, "Good night."

Khairpur Mirs, January, 1923. ELSA KAZI.

WINCANTON CENTRE.

The Rev. Prebendary Ross opened the new session with a lecture on *Piers Plowman*, which was much appreciated, the numerous references to local history greatly adding to its interest. On October 6th the members once again had the privilege of hearing some delightful readings from Chaucer given by the Rev. Prebendary Daniel. The Chairman also contributed some interesting items. Miss Meade read a paper on October 27th entitled "What is Poetry?" It roused much interest, and was followed by a discussion, after which the members expressed their thanks to Miss Meade. On November 24th the subject was "Sea Poems," and was introduced in a most interesting way by the Rev. J. R. Scolfield, after which several poems were read by members and others. Mr. Roger Clark (of Street) lectured on December 8th, on "The Lake Poets in Somerset"—an attractive subject, very attractively treated. The paper presented a vivid picture of the life of the Lake Poets among the Quantocks—especially that of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, and Coleridge. On January 26th the Chairman—the Rev. C. P. Sheppard—read a very interesting and well-constructed paper on "Tennyson: His Life and His Message." There was a good attendance of members and visitors, and the meeting was one of the most enjoyable held this session.—Lorna Keeling Collard, Hon. Secretary.

THANET.

On January 27th Miss Edison read a paper on "Browning's Ethics"; on February 24th Mrs. Wales dealt with "Shakespeare," and on March 31st Miss Waterer will lecture on "Kipling."

On April 28th Miss Bayley will read scenes from Phillips's *Paolo and Francesca*, and on May 26th a meeting will be held to read over parts for play. Miss Bayley will read scenes from the play which the Centre will perform in June or July in public. It will be left to the members to choose whether they prefer Milton's *Comus* or *Paolo and Francesca*. The Centre, we are assured, is thriving inwardly as well as outwardly, and is an active and desirable representative of the Poetry Society.

KENSINGTON CENTRE.

On January 11th, at Miss Sorley's house, 73, Onslow Square, members read selections from the poet from whom they considered they had learned the most, and also from the one for whom they had the greatest affection, and a discussion followed. On January 25th the President, Mrs. Mends-Gibson, gave a paper on "Mind, Heart and Spirit" as exemplified in different poets. A great many members attended, over 50 being present in Mrs. Holroyd Chaplin's room. Mrs. Holroyd Chaplin kindly took the chair, and there was

a good discussion after the President's address. The March meetings are :—

8th.—Miss Sybil Bristowe, "Poets and Music," at 16, Devonshire Place, W.

22nd.—Capt. Cranmer Byng, "Salma, an Oriental Play," at 4, Cranley Place, South Kensington.

A NEW SCHOOL OF ENGLISH POETRY.

Professor W. L. Renwick, M.A., Professor of English Language and Literature at Armstrong College, lecturing to the Newcastle Centre of the Poetry Society on "Spenser and the Revival of Poetry," said that the publication of the *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579 was the deliberate launching of a new school of poetry in England. Poetry, he went on to say, did not happen spontaneously by accident; and in Spenser's case, though there was no deep soil of English poetry out of which his could grow, there was such a soil abroad. Spenser knew what he was doing; he had learned his lesson of poetry from Greece and Rome, Italy and France, and he exploited all he had learned for the sake of his own land. He did this well.

HAMPSTEAD.

The annual general business meeting of the Centre was held on January 16th, 1923, when the following officers and committee were elected: President, the Rev. A. H. Lee; Vice-President, Miss Lilian Lloyd; Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Aynsley; Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. F. Tilly; Assistant Secretary, Miss F. Huntsman. Committee, Miss Julie Huntsman, Miss Montague, Miss Solomon, Mr. F. V. Blows. It was reported that the meetings during the year had been well attended, and the readings given by the members showed great care in their selection and rendering.

The following programme has been arranged: March 6th, Seventeenth-Century Poets; March 20th, Loudon; April 3rd, Blake; April 17th, Members' Special Meeting arranged by Mr. Cowan; May 1st, Blake.

The meetings are held at Miss Julie Huntsman's Studios, 150, Finchley Road, N.W.3, at 7.45 p.m. Further particulars of the work of the Centre can be obtained of the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. F. Tilly, 32, Camden Square, N.W.1.

CHELMSFORD CENTRE.

The following meetings have been held:

November 8th.—*Macbeth* reading. Mr. W. H. Creasy presided and twenty-one other members took part.

December 6th.—"English Ballads." Mr. E. T. Dixon presided

and Miss A. Staniforth, M.A., read a paper on "English Ballads," which was illustrated with readings by members. Fifteen members took part.

January 17th.—"20th Century Poetry." Miss E. M. Bancroft, M.A., presided, and thirteen members read contemporary poetry.

February 7th.—"Business and Discussion." Mr. E. Arnold presided and, after a short business meeting, Mr. W. H. Creasy read a paper on "Lyrical Poetry," which was afterwards discussed by members.

A meeting has been arranged for March 7th, when Miss E. M. Bancroft, M.A., will read a paper on "Euripides," followed by a member's reading of "Hippolytus" (Gilbert Murray's translation), which the Poetry Society produced in a distinctive manner at the Imperial Institute in 1912.

PERSONALITIES IN POETRY.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

SIR,—All who are in any way concerned for the dignity of poetry will welcome THE POETRY REVIEW's condemnation of the sneering reference to the alleged personal weaknesses of the late Stephen Phillips by a junior literary mandarin who admittedly was not acquainted with the late editor of THE POETRY REVIEW. Bad taste and bad manners, even without the animating motive of childish jealousy and spiteful malice, which seems to infect a considerable section of literary critics, have so much professional indulgence that your protest, together with your recent objection to the parade of petty personalities about dead poets in recent books of reminiscences, will perhaps supply a very necessary and timely corrective. Personalities have been allowed to obtrude too much on a man's work in both the major and the minor sphere, and it is refreshing to find signs of a reaction such as is indicated in a provincial paper's report of a lecture by Mr. J. C. Squire, which complained that "Mr. Squire dealt with his subject very much in the abstract, and succeeded in talking for an hour and a half without mentioning the works of more than one contemporary poet." This is an improvement on the prevailing habit of mutual back scratching—and biting. Perhaps we shall have fewer periodicals and anthologies published for the purpose of carrying the editor's own verses, and less will be heard of little bands of bards who make an alliance to mention each other repeatedly in public and private, in speech and article. The apparently slight general control exercised over the literary columns of many newspapers is responsible for the growth of the latter practice.—Yours,

Darlington, January 29. A. T. D.

BRISTOL AND CLIFTON CENTRE.

At a meeting on November 24th, at Felixstowe, Clifton Down, a programme was given of poems and ballads illustrating the course of English history. Many of the reciters have gained medals and certificates in the examinations of the Poetry Society and were listened to with great interest by a large audience. The poems were linked together by suitable music, and the last recitation—*For the Fallen* (Binyon)—was recited by Miss Rosamonde Bigge to Chopin's *Funeral March* and was very effective. A collection was taken for the town of Béthune, which has been adopted by the city of Bristol, and where houses are being erected. Eleven pounds was sent to the Lord Mayor's Fund and was augmented a few days later when the programme was repeated to another audience.

THE BRIDGE OF POETRY

At the Summer Meeting of the Association of Assistant Mistresses, at Wallasey, special addresses were given by two speakers, Mr. Channon Collinge and Dr. Oliver C. de C. Ellis, both representing the Poetry Society. Mr. Collinge led with a paper on "Imagination and Poetry"; Dr. Ellis followed with "Poetry and Science," each subject forming an interesting complement to the other. Mr. Collinge dealt with poetry as the work of the creative artist, the combining and re-combining of mental images derived from experience. In the broader sense we all were creative artists, using experience in this way to build up personality, especially if in the course of such building-up we attained purity of soul through sympathy and tenderness. Such experiences as were expressed in the poets, however, gave us the universal values, the true realities of life, those realities with which the teacher is peculiarly concerned in this work. Coming to practical issues, Mr. Collinge described poetry as the means by which the gap was bridged between the "classical" and "modern" side of the school curriculum, by which the emotional life of the child, the inner life which is the real life, is to be encouraged and developed. In the very young child the response to the appeal thus made by poetry was always evident in the delight shown in the rhythm of song and dance, even in the rhythm of the multiplication table and in the jingle of rhymes. But this early promise was not always fulfilled: the fresh eagerness of the child too often gave place to the conventional attitude of the average person towards poetry. Much responsibility lay with the teacher: there was still room for improvement in the schools, still too much of the "happy-go-lucky" attitude in forming time-tables and providing the right kind of teacher when English was the subject under consideration.

A SCIENTIFIC POET ON POETRY AND SCIENCE

Dr. Ellis introduced his subject by dealing with the common fallacy which places poetry and science in antithesis, and with the attitude due to this false presumption. There was the hot-headed partisan who thought poetry unintelligible rubbish, and his opponent, who regarded science as cold and cruel. There was the tolerant person who believed in "holding the balance even," and talked of a broad and liberal education—a sound conclusion from a false premise. There was a third aspect in which the rhythms of poetry were seen to be akin to the rhythms of the universe. These rhythms, however, were a superposed music, more necessary than the melody of rhyme, but not the care of poetry, which was a thing not of the senses but of the mind. The fourth attitude, the theory of the mutual debt of science and poetry, was then examined and poetry seen to be undoubtedly a debtor. The position of science was not so clear, but at least science was so much in debt to imaginative thinking as to be totally dependent upon it. The true antithesis was between the imaginative man and the unimaginative. Science by physical and intellectual analysis and synthesis was working towards a definite goal, the comprehension of Nature, or, one might say, God. This goal was poetry transcendent. Sudden flashes of premonitory realisation, leaping the present gulf, are all we know of poetry: we are as polar explorers who sometimes see the Aurora: but our knowledge is increasing. The beginnings of poetry are in science, and the end of science is a poetry robbed of pathos, yearning, and sadness, clothing the happy explorer with the satisfaction of his dream.

POETRY AND SCIENCE

I

A FALLACY is a humbugging, play-acting, hypocritical thing; an elusive thing, a persistently dangerous thing. In this era, which has been called *ad nauseam*—but truly called—the age of specialisation, each one of us, his nose glued to his own particular grindstone, is liable to accept perilous and insidious fallacies merely because they do not immediately concern him. So we accepted in times which are, I hope, past, the abominable fallacy *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, and awoke later to find ourselves one and all individually involved in the rescue of a country for which we had, individually, perhaps little affection. So, many of us accept even now the conception of some mysterious antithesis or opposition between Poetry and Science. It is a fallacy.

This fallacy has a fourfold manifestation. In the first place it creates partisans: we have the pro-poet who sees the scientist as a man with an immense cranium, a bunsen burner in one pocket and a pipette in the other, working out some hellish scheme for the final annihilation of suffering humanity: the pro-scientist is just as bad; to him, the poet is an amiable ninny with long hair, perpetrating daydreams in an old maid's drawing-room. And the pity of it is that for such people, if one side is up, the other must be down. Anatole France, the peerless, whose *Isle of Penguins* was the best scientific study of patriotism since Dr. Johnson, is actually among the victims of this mistake. He wrote recently, this man at one time so afraid of angles and dots that geometry and mathematics were a closed book to him: "I now stand humbly before Thales, Pythagoras, Hipparchus, who first attempted to measure the world, before Galileo—you who have been too wise to love suffering, yet suffered for the truth. In those remote hours, what a poor little ass I was! I was in a great hurry to shout without any discrimination at all for

literature and art." What a somersault! Anatole France does not seem to realise that he can pay a handsome tribute to science without any consequent slight to literature.

The second mental attitude occasioned by our fallacy is typified by the "broad-minded" people, those who pride themselves on their "tolerance," their "catholic sympathies," their "love of balance" in education; those who, contrasting the sciences with the "humanities," think that education should consist in homœopathic doses of a little of each. Miss Burstall, for example, at the 1922 Headmistresses' Conference, said "the girl should have a grounding in physics and chemistry and go on to botany and zoology. The teaching of botany should be on experimental lines, and the teacher (*sic*) should have a knowledge of basic chemistry. She suggested that all girls should be taught elementary zoology, but she objected to the regulations which made science teaching compulsory after the girls had had a good elementary grounding. She had to give them all two years after that, not because they needed or liked it, but because the regulations said she must."

But this Manchester lady later somewhat modified the antagonistic impression gained from the words quoted above by saying "she would not have such a profound belief in science and mathematics if she did not also believe that they had, for those who understood them, a transcendental and deeply spiritual significance." A foggy state of mind! Miss Raymond, of Kidderminster, was nearer the truth when "she thought the girl ought to have three years as a minimum for the study of physics and chemistry. After that she 'had her foot in the door and her eye at the crack and saw long vistas of knowledge opening before her.'"

But here is a fragment from Sir A. Ward's charming Morality, *The Contencyoun between Lettrys and Science*,* which exemplifies perfectly the idea of a broad-minded alliance between the two (very different) studies. After

* *Manchester University Verses.* (Manchester University Press.)

many pages of delightful dialogue between Imbecility in the disguise of Lady Lettrys (with her followers Reckless Redundance and Questionable Quotation), and Impudence in the Disguise of Dame Science (with her followers, Absolute Assurance and Mutual Malignity), Good Instruction speaks thus to Tom Trepid, the mazed and weary seeker after Truth :—

> Vain fool! that thoughtest in a single bound
> To leap the depth that yawns in depth profound,
> And sawest not, stretching from ridge to ridge,
> The work of toil, the arches of the bridge ;
> Nor on the further side above the storms
> Beheldst in union fair two sister-forms,
> Slowly progressing, linked hand in hand,
> To Wisedome's bower, smiling o'er the land!

There is a third attitude which seeks to link up Science with Poetry through the rhythms of the Universe. It conceives the basis of Science and Poetry to be this common law of rhythm. I myself have expounded this attitude * with great unction. And it is very easy to do so, seeing that the basis of *everything* is rhythm ; but rhythm is not the *core* of poetry any more than rhyme is. It is a pretty dress, an independent superposed music, but after all, a mere garniture of something higher, a pleasing frill to noble thinking and, in short, a matter of expression. What is the stimulus that arouses this expression ? *There* is the core of poetry.

A fourth attitude deals with the mutual indebtedness of Science and Poetry. Indeed, a very good case may be made out on both sides. Take the indebtedness of Science to the poet and fabulist. In the *Travels of Sir John de Mandeville, Knight*, you read of a country where the inhabitants get about on one leg ; an immense foot gives them plenty of purchase for the long hop which constitutes their walk. Science gives us the Pogo. In the *Bhagavata Purana* we find the Darwinian theory of evolution clearly set forth ; in the *Laws of Manu* we learn of an imponderable

* *Manchester Guardian*, March 11th, 1921.

essence pervading the Universe, known as Akahsa, which appears to be none other than the ether.* In the romances of Chrétien de Troyes there is a story called *Yvain*; and among the scenery described there, is a lake of water, icy cold, but boiling. That is an experiment which you may see any day in the laboratory of a secondary school. In another essay † I have asserted "We are living among the realised dreamstuffs of our ancestors. It is strange to see our 'modern discoveries' peering ashamédly at us out of the old fables so seldom taken down from high, dusty shelves. You may read in the story of Kilhwch and Olwen in the *Mabinogion*, the following remarkable passage: 'No vessels will keep warm the liquor that is put therein save the bottles of Gwyddolwyd Gorr which preserve the heat of the liquor that is put into them in the East until they arrive at the West.' And this ancient premonition of the vacuum-flask is closely followed by a reference to sterilising bottles: 'The bottles of Rhinnon Rhin Barnawd wherein no liquor ever turns sour.' I have selected these two instances merely because they are not commonplace. Do we not fly through the air? Man has dreamt of it always, desire easily outpacing the evolution of the idea from considerations of mechanical theory. Think, too, of the nursery rhyme of the cow, which could not wait for our mathematicians with their gradually developing 'ether-grip' by means of which we shall yet on holidays go in parties a-picking rare lichens in the crenellated cockpits of the moon."

Whatever you may think of that argument, there can be no doubt of the debt of the scientist to imaginative thinking. Scientists do *not* "deduce theories from facts." They get their data, make certain of their truth, multiply them, and then—leaving their mental focus quite clear—relegate these facts to the margin of their consciousness and *dream*. All sorts of little ideas and hypotheses come floating in, but there is no response from the margin. They are dismissed.

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* G. B., *New Statesman*, November 11th, 1922.

† *Manchester Quarterly*, XLVII, 246, "Some Thoughts on Poetry."

Suddenly there comes a thought upon whose advent all the dry data in the margin rush forward to form a living, palpitating pattern. So we got Avogadro's Hypothesis, now one of the most fixed and assured laws of science. No man who ever had the scientific attitude has failed to be, to that extent, a poet. "If we would discover," said Kekulé, "let us dream"; and Faraday writes, "Nothing is too wonderful to be true."

> Young Science, linked with worship, came
> Gowned at last in comely shame,
> To find in every flower—a flame.

That is from Branford,* and it describes the true scientific attitude: "In Nature's book of infinite secrecy, a little can I read."

But I realise that we have not yet done with our fallacy. Science is "the pursuit of knowledge," but Poetry? We have not yet defined it. We can, however, see now what is the true antithesis. Two men are looking out at night upon a summer garden. The thoughts of one of them are something like this:—

> Out there, the garden sighs in sleep.
> Odours of hyacinth and musk
> On little winds come fluting through the dusk
> Or pause at some green leaf and weep,
> Leaving a hammocked dew-drop swinging slowly. . . .†

There is the poet, the scientist, the imaginative man. The other says vacuously, "Rippin' night, hwaw?" He supplies the antithesis. The opposition, the contrast, the antithesis is between imagination and the lack of it.

II

It may help us to some conception of what Poetry really is if we consider the history of the human race. The recent discovery of human bones in the Broken Hill Mine,

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* *Titans and Gods.* (Christophers.)

† *Samson Adami.* (Sherratt & Hughes.)

in Rhodesia, gives us valuable information on this head. They are at least half a million years—shall we say 5,000 centuries—old. They represent Man after an evolution of 10,000 centuries. After an evolution of 10,000 centuries, what was Man like ?

> The eyes glowered from beneath heavy and very bony ridges which would almost serve to ram a fellow human. The forehead sloped backward at a depth that would disgust a Bushman. The huge, bulging upper jaw and massive back of the head need no clairvoyante to read this man's story. He was an eating, breeding and fighting creature ; a heavy, powerful, slow-moving savage, with long and fearfully strong arms, with curved thighs which made him stoop, his only clothing a thick coat of hair.*

So we may plot the history of our evolution, and by extrapolation project ourselves along the general line of the evolution that is yet to be. What points can we plot on our graph ? First, we have indiscriminate eating, breeding and fighting. Then eating, breeding and fighting to please—literally and metaphorically—the palate. Then eating, breeding and fighting from necessity. And, finally, the *end* of eating, breeding and fighting. How near are we getting to that end ? Fighting among educated people is rare enough to cause a sensation. It is commonly reputed to be bad form to take too much pleasure in eating. Finally, the birthrate is falling. . . . This is not a new idea ; the goal of evolution was defined nearly 2,000 years ago as a place where there is no marriage nor giving in marriage. How far along that road ? In my opinion, we are about at the bend of the curve. In my opinion, we are in sight of the end. If that is not a delusion, the end will come something like this. In more or less generations—according to the sturdiness of the stock—of intellectual culture, the stock dies out ; meanwhile, the intellectual culture of other stocks is increasing, the proportion of *intelligentsia* to the rest of Society remaining, from economic considerations, pretty constant. So both dwindle down the curve to zero.

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* Joseph McCabe.

But is that the end of the race ? No ! The survival of the race is of little interest to us if the individual perishes ; and if the individual survive, to speak of the end of the race is farcical. To me, there is nothing tragic in this outlook ; rather something supremely satisfying—the slow climb up the ladder of evolution, the final plunge into the empyreal blue. And this last phase of evolution, upon which we have already entered, began with the first dentist ; it began with the first man who moved aside to let another pass ; it began with the first man who loved and asked nothing in return.

Now I need not remind you that early poetry—where it was not religious, and we must not short-circuit the argument or " beg the question " by admitting that factor at present—was concerned with eating, breeding and fighting. Musical ? Who can doubt it ? Who can forget " the innumerable laughter of the sea " ? But concerned in plot and essence with these three primal instincts it undoubtedly was. These instincts became at first encrusted with less primitive and sometimes baser things. But there was another process at work, for you may have atavism and degeneration, yet still the steady stream of evolution goes on. These instincts became sublimated. Fighting might become wealth-hunger in a world which did not guarantee personal security, but it also became " the hate of Hate, the scorn of Scorn." What could be more passionately pure and holy than the first love of a young boy, a strange phenomenon of worship which I have tried elsewhere* to describe. It is a sign-post for the human race. Child-hunger will reach sublimity in " the love of Love." We are not there yet ? No, but we are far along the road. The end of that road is transcendent Poetry ; and Science is the spear-head in the hand of Evolution, pressing ever nearer to its goal.

Meanwhile, *pari passu* with our own evolution, the subject matter of poetry is changing. Poets no longer write about eating, breeding and fighting. They have

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* Poetry Review, 1922, XIII., 324.

resigned two of these subjects to the boys' weeklies and the other to *The Farmer and Stockbreeder*. What are the poet's "props." nowadays? Here are some of them—a typical box set—water under trees, birds on the water, birds in the trees, "stars up above," sunrise over the sea, moonset in a lake, the hair and eyes of a girl, the (reputed) voice of the nightingale, the scents of flowers. . . . Nature study! Science! I do not know whether the greater naturalist or poet was revealed in Browning when he wrote:

> That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over
> Lest you should think he never could recapture
> The first, fine, careless rapture.

You have long regarded that as exquisite poetry. So it is. But it is Science too. How delightfully, how unforgettably it recreates the whole cheeky assurance of the bird. Of a chaffinch it would have been nonsense. But it was a thrush. What beauty Physics has contributed to this of Housman's:*

> But over sea and continent from sight
> Safe to the Indies has the earth conveyed
> The vast and moon-eclipsing cone of night,
> Her towering foolscap of eternal shade.
> See, in mid-heaven the sun is mounted; hark
> The belfries tingle to the noonday chime.
> 'T is silent, and the subterranean dark
> Has crossed the nadir and begins to climb.

As a matter of fact, the relation of literature to science, or a branch of science, is tacitly admitted by every reviewer who adversely criticises a piece of work on the ground of its "false psychology." Some people talk as though there could be no collaboration between science and poetry without dragging formulæ and equations into rhyme; but these things are mere tools, mnemonics, shorthand. There is no question of presenting a declension or a table of conjugations as literature; and there is far more poetry in Mendeléeff's periodic table than in these.

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* *Last Poems*, No. XXXVI.

Now, no science has a monopoly of beautiful thought; and every scientist about to express some new thought, or some old thought in a new way, is in imminent peril of creating a poem. I admit that the verse written by a scientific worker is usually lamentable; but we are speaking of the core, not of the dress of poetry, and when Kekulé wrote that wonderful defence of his benzene formula he was entertaining the Muse unaware. Another poet* put over it the dress of verse, and people praised him, not Kekulé:

> What infinite complexities there muster
> Within the compass of a needle's eye!
> The tiny atoms gravitate and cluster;
> Chime each on each in measured euphony,
> Each molecule a belfry, where the ears
> Of some minute homunculus or elf
> Might listen to the music of the spheres
> Or, greatly daring, play on them himself;
> Until, ecstatic at the endless pageant
> He'd dance in rhythm upon the great stage set;
> And we should call him "Catalytic Agent" . . .
> But he'd reck naught of our long epithet.
>
> The bells we fashion mutter and are still
> Or e'er the sexton's locked the belfry door;
> But these will beat and quaver, throb and thrill,
> Timing and chiming so for evermore.

But F. V. Branford† has gone beyond the molecule to the atom; in his poem, *The Dæmon*, he has dwelt on the logical outcome of recent discoveries as to the nature of matter. But that is a matter of dress, as he would be the first to assert. The inherent poetry, the core of the whole, is in the scientific discoveries themselves.

Have we, then, arrived now at the true relation between Science and Poetry? That scientific research at each success provides a thrill which is the core of poetry? That is near the truth, but there is something else.

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* *Samson Adami.* (Sherratt & Hughes.)
† *Titans and Gods.* (Christophers.)

III

Some six months ago in the *Sunday Chronicle*, a paper not despised by those who read it, an article by the author of *The Unspeakable Scot* summed up the position of the Scot in British life, and added :

> But of the brains of brains, namely, poets' brains, which in the long run rule whatever exists to be ruled, England has had what amounts to a virtual monopoly for 500 years, and even in the extremely unlikely event of her never producing another welter-weight poet, that monopoly must remain with her so long as the human intellect persists. Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Kipling, Thomas Hardy is the rough count of the true-born, true-bred, true-blooded out-toppers of knowledge to the time of writing. There is not a Scotchman among them.

Two names at least must have jumped to every reader's mind. Two jumped to mine, and they were not Henryson and Dunbar. Scott, I recollected, was an excellent novelist, and I remembered that there was a great deal of true poetical feeling—in his novels. What of Burns ? I recalled line after line, all most unfortunate ; I began to feel that perhaps Burns had not really written any great poetry. Then there came back to me a song of boyhood :

> Yestreen when tae the trembling string
> The dance gaed round the lichted ha'
> Tae thee my fancy took its wing ;
> I sat ; but neither heard nor saw.
> Though this was fine an' that was braw
> An' yon the toast o' a' the toun,
> I could hae cried amang them a'
> Ye arena' Mary Morrison.

And I said, " That is poetry ! " Yes, but why is it poetry ? Is it not because the highest common factor of human delight is love, and this poem describes a fundamental universal experience that has never been described in that way before ? That answer would account for the uncanny fascination of these lines of Blunden's in *Forefathers* :

On the green they watched their sons
Playing till too dark to see,
As their fathers watched them once,
As my father once watched me ;
While the bat and beetle flew
On the warm air webbed with dew.

Unpretentious craftsmanship ! Plain dress ! But look at the thought, and ask yourself whether it is the recaptured moment of youth or the flash of realisation of universal kinship that makes it poetry.

It is this flash, this sudden contact with Nature, the great mother, or shall we say the All-father, that is the other half of the truth about the core of poetry, the other aspect of the undivided truth. For Knowledge is the archetype of the great egg with which we played in childhood. Within its shell is another ; within that, another and yet another, and as we remove sheath after sheath, husk after husk, we progress nearer and nearer to the goal, the core. Hacking away at the great egg—that is Science. Each shell newly laid bare, each centrifugal flash of light from the core, making for a moment all opacity translucent—that is Poetry. Science, by physical and intellectual analysis and synthesis, is working toward a definite goal—the comprehension of Nature, of God. This goal is Poetry transcendent. Sudden flashes of premonitory realisation, leaping the present gulf, are all we know of poetry now. We are as polar explorers, urging northward, sometimes gladdened by the Aurora—but our knowledge is ever increasing, the distance lessening, the Aurora becoming more frequent. The very beginnings of Poetry are in Science ; and the end of Science is a Poetry robbed of sadness and pathos, clothing the happy explorer with the satisfaction of his dreams.

IV

Now there are certain implications in what I have just written, on which I should like to dwell at greater length. There is an old aphorism, quoted with complete approval

the other day by H. B. Charlton,* that "Poetry is the stuff that poets write," an aphorism which, I confess, merely fills me with irritation. What is a poet? That is just the point. The correct question is "*When* is a poet?" Only at the moment of inspiration. It is the incompleteness and transience of the flash of revelation that accounts, in Masefield's opinion, for the pathos of poetry. It is this sense which made a *long poem* a contradiction in terms to Edgar Allan Poe.

Poetry must express something new, or apprehend an old thing newly. This is the witness of the revelation. It is not sufficient to avoid the hackneyed phrase. "When music, poetry or painting has real æsthetic significance, we cannot recognise the emotion it awakes in us because that emotion is *new*," says W. J. Turner.† "It is something we have not experienced before."

This conception of poetry makes us wonder what Macaulay of the lays and essays meant when he wrote: "Perhaps no man can be a poet or can even enjoy poetry without a certain unsoundness of mind,—if anything which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness! Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry, but it is the truth of madness. The reasoning is just, but the premises are false." Now my thesis has been simply that poetry is a response to the scientist's search for truth. Need we define truth, even for Pilate? Even for B. S. of the *Manchester Guardian*, who wrote, "A theory of poetry is impossible ‡ without a theory of truth"? I mean Truth in the plain man's sense of the word. Dunsany would not agree. Blackwood lays it down that everything we think, *ipso facto*, becomes true. Dostoievsky paid a peculiar compliment § to him who said, "He that is of the Truth heareth My voice." But W. J. Turner comes to my aid

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* *Manchester Guardian*, November 11th, 1922.

† *New Statesman*, October 14th and 28th, 1922.

‡ August 14th, 1922.

§ "If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth."

again. "We judge," says he, "or should judge music just as we judge the theory of a physicist, solely by whether or no it corresponds with reality. We ask of music as we ask of a scientific theory or of a poem or of any work of literature, 'Is it true?'"

And that is the trouble with so many of our writers. As Arthur Symons * has written of Proust, "His vision is like a clouded mirror, in whose depths strange shapes flash and vanish." So, too, Middleton Murry † goes to the root of the whole matter of style. The essential is the originating emotion. "It follows from this conception of style," says the *Weekly Westminster*, "that there is no essential difference between prose and poetry.‡ It is not the mould that matters, but the quality of the emotional material." This is almost exactly what F. S. Flint says in his preface to *Otherworld: Cadences*. But surely if these flashes of truth come from the core of the great egg, by which I mean what C. P.§ calls the "white, burning shrine of things," they are there for all to see? That is by no means the case, and even were that hypothesis granted, our receptivity still varies and our responses differ. Shelley speaks of the poet as "hidden in the light of thought," and Robert Lynd, projecting the metaphor, writes: "There is more colour in Keats than in Shelley"—the response is different—"but there is more light in Shelley than in Keats. His radiance is different in kind from that of any other poet." What does that mean but a purity of translucence and reflection? Such poetry is a living thing. The imitation of it can at best be but a statue to mortality. Yet Rosenberg aimed at poetry "where an interesting complexity of thought is kept in tone and right value to the dominating idea, so that it is understandable and still ungraspable." He didn't think "there should be any vagueness at all, but a sense of something hidden and felt to be there." Fortunately Rosenberg turned out to be

* *Weekly Westminster*, November 25th, 1922.
† *The Problem of Style.*
‡ June 17th, 1922.
§ *Manchester Guardian*, January 12th, 1923.

something of a Pygmalion. Otherwise he would have had to share Saintsbury's criticism of the work of Richard Middleton as "having only the outward character of poetry." But to write like that is to sell the pass to the enemy, to cause the sons of Belial to rejoice, to enable cynics like Nietzsche to say: "Poets make their water muddy that it may seem deep." Scientists, too, suffer this treachery. It was of chemists that Boyle himself wrote: "That a person any Thing versed in the writings of Chymists cannot but Discern by their obscure, ambiguous and almost Aenigmatical Way of expressing what they pretend to Teach, that they have no mind to be understood at all."

But that is rather a matter of expression than of sincerity. After all, it is sincerity that matters. Take Maeterlinck, of whom we read: * "A profoundly religious man, religion is not for him the soothing syrup that it is for so many of his fellows. He follows truth, according to his lights, wherever she leads him." There is Science; there, Poetry. "In most attempts to reconcile Science and Poetry," says another writer,† "it is Poetry which takes the initiative, extending her gracious hand with offers of beautification and adornment." But this is not true. The fundamental beauty of a scientific discovery is in its nakedness; and the function of Poetry is not that of a painter and decorator; rather is it that of an interpreter.

V

This brings us to the explanation of the glaring fact which hitherto we have ignored, the poor crop of scientific poetry in the sense usually attributed to those words. It is simply that we have few poets who are abreast of modern science, few scientists who can express themselves beautifully. Or, as Aldous Huxley ‡ says:—

It is very rare that we find a poet who combines the power and

* G. B., loc. cit.

† *New Statesman*, September 23rd, 1922.

‡ *Weekly Westminster*, October 28th, 1922.

the desire to express himself with the passionate apprehension of idea and the passionate curiosity about strange, remote facts of the man of science or the philosopher. If he possessed the requisite sense of language and the impelling desire to express himself in terms of beauty, Einstein could write the most intoxicating lyrics about relativity and the pleasures of pure mathematics. And if Mr. Yeats understood the Einstein theory, if he apprehended it exultingly as something bold and profound, something vitally important and marvellously true, he too could give us his lyrics of relativity. It is those distressing little *ifs* that stand in the way of this happy consummation.

The crop, however, is improving. "It is a commonplace," writes Herford,* "that wide tracts of what was once counted the kingdom of prose have been reclaimed for Poetry." And he puts Prose in inverted commas! Was not Lord Balfour suffering perhaps a little from the *malaise* of Rip van Winkle, when the other day, in the Gifford Lecture,† he asserted that "Science was still waiting for that philosophic foundation which he was sure it would some day attain." Sir Arthur Keith,‡ last June, at Aberdeen, summed up the position I think, in few words, when he said: "As yet we see but a little way, but some day Science may scale the citadel of Life itself and reveal its beginning and meaning."

We can go further back to well-known words: "Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you." It is the seeking, the knocking, that is Science; it is the finding, the partial success, that is Poetry. Science and poetry, what are they but the two aspects of human religion?

This does not exclude revelation. If a careless worker leaves a lump of sodium in a jar of isoprene, it is nothing to his credit that synthetic rubber is discovered. But it is a scientific discovery. If another breaks the thermometer he is using, letting the mercury drop into his preparation, and then finds that a little mercury was just what was

* *Manchester Guardian*, October 23rd, 1922.
† *Manchester Guardian*, October 29th, 1922.
‡ *Daily Mail*, June 17th, 1922.

wanted to make the operation successful, that is not to his credit as a manipulator, but it is a scientific discovery. Revelation ? The history of science is full of it.

Then these three things should react similarly to a simple test. The reagent ? Humour. Is there any humour in religion ? In science ? In poetry ? You are not sure about the poetry. Think of an incident in one of our epic poems :—

> And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout ; for the Lord hath given you the city. So the people shouted and the priests blew with the trumpets ; and it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpet that the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat and they took the city.

Now that was poetry to me, till I tried to explain it all to a small boy with a large illustrated Bible. There were the priests with their robes and long beards. " What did they shout ? " asked the little chap, and before I could reply, answered himself, " I *know* what they would shout. Of course ! *Beaver !* " Shall I ever see the lofty poetry of that again ? Not if I think of all those old " beavers " walking round Jericho expecting the walls to fall down !

No ! The atmosphere of Poetry is the hush of wonder ; and that is why there can be no humorous poetry. Verse, felicitously turned, beautifully expressed, Yes ! But not humour and poetry at the same instant ! You may often have a set of verses in which Pierrot and Columbine flit in and out. You feel the flashes of poetry reaching into you. Suddenly you laugh. Why, it is Harlequin again, and there is the Clown. But the hush of wonder is gone. Listen to this :—

> He sits in the sun with a pannikin of gin,
> And remarks with an oath that the tide's a-coming in ;
> And when the tide is up, if there's anyone about,
> He remarks with a curse that the tide's a-going out.
> When a ship comes in with a complicated rig,
> He can tell you at a glance if she's a frigate or a brig ;
> And the one sort of ship that he never could abide
> Is a ship that's at sea with himself inside.

That is from A. P. Herbert. Excellent fooling, but where is the hush of wonder? A true character-study, but no poem. The clown is on the stage all the time, and Herbert has put Pantaloon there too. Do not think that I wish to decry humour. It is easy to dispraise the present age, to lament that vainly may the carillon peal forth from the steeple to ears attuned to the blare of the merry-go-round. That would be mere futility. Poetry is a thing of moments; a flash—and it is gone. Our frames are not built to stand unremitted ecstasy. But humour is a thing to live with. The point I am making is simply that the two things won't mix. What we mean by a humorous poem is an attempt to make an emulsion. If I have shown that, it is what I set out to prove. Poetry is the end. Science is the means. Religion is the mental posture which desires this end and has faith in this means. This is no new doctrine. It is not due even to Wordsworth, who wrote: "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science"; it is not due even to Leucippus, Democritus or Lucretius; nor even to the author of the Book of Job. It was inherent in the genesis of things. It will become explicit in the Apocalypse. "In the beginning," we read, "the spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters. And the Earth brought forth." *What* did the Earth bring forth? Strange, two-legged things, that brooded upon the spirit of God!

OLIVER C. DE C. ELLIS.

P.S.—Apropos the foregoing, I have received with the proofs, *Poems of Science*, by K. Hallowes, M.A., of the Geological Survey of India.

In the course of his Introduction, the author writes: "Speaking generally, the poetic material furnished by Science has, hitherto, been left unmined by the poets." We find in this sentence the key to our emotions on reading the book. "Ha! ha!" says the writer, in effect, "I have looked this way and that, but every vein was worked. Here is virgin soil! Here I peg out my claim!" In the

result, he presents us with 284 lines of verse which would have been far more interesting, far more poetic and infinitely more concise, as terse prose. It is fatal to poetry to expand upon a theme.

Yet this writer has one of the two essentials of the poet's make-up: he is sensitive to Beauty; he has not lost Wonder. The poetry of geology has moved him deeply; "light from the core" has invaded and illuminated his being. He has tried to transmit this light; and with too little equipment, deaf to his own harsh rhythms, blind to his own inversions and commonplaces, he insists on presenting this beauty in verse.

But Beauty will not be denied. The Poetry of Geology does at times flash out from this rough diamond which has absorbed so much of it, even clothing itself in happy phrasing. The evidence of poetic outlook is indubitable, intrude homiletics and moralisations as they may. So he can write: "From rocks once molten fire, blue speedwells bloom." Interest is challenged by lines like :—

> This limestone, too, is slowly worn away,
> For acid from the ivy-stem invades
> The rock, delving deep channels. Thus Decay
> With dissolution everything pervades.

in spite of the use of identities for rhymes.

"I saw a sandstone surface, ripple-creased," is a line in which the author provides himself with a model of conciseness. Nor is his explanation tedious: he tells :—

> How once this rock, companion of the cloud,
> Was sand, the wavelets of a sea did tread
> In shoreward dance. I saw imprinted there
> The footsteps of that merry-making crowd.

That is pretty, however much we may dislike "did tread."

A fossil shell inspires his best sustained effort :—

> Though twice ten thousand stormy years are told
> Since ocean silt embalming did enfold
> Its sculptured spire, it is unworn to-day!

O fair Historian of the Earth, by me
Observed within these fields, now tilled by Man,
I never could have known that this dry land
Was, long ago, before his age began,
Beneath the billows of a sounding sea,
If Time's sharp tooth had gnawed you into sand!

There is real feeling in the apostrophe to the Sun, with which he ends :—

O Sun, I would have worshipped thee each morn,
With altar sacrifice and heathen rites,
Had I not known the Eternal Light of Lights!

O. C. DE C. E.

NIGHT TRAINS

I LOVE to hear the trains come past
At night, when not a sound is heard
But rustling leaves; or, scamp'ring fast
Among dead twigs, a field-mouse, stirred
By the soft snap of grass-blades where
A horse is grazing; or the slight
And rapid flicking of the air
That bats make in their wand'ring flight.

Like wind, across the stillness comes
An engine's purring, first remote,
Between its wooded banks it hums
With mounting rhythm to a note
Of throbbing clamour. Then with shrill,
Sharp shrieks hurl'd to the sky, it draws
A Titan breath, and, climbing still,
It takes the tunnel.—There's a pause.—
And then a smothered droning sound
That swells up to a sudden burst
When, with a roaring, clanking bound
The train leaps out; and wide dispersed,
Tumultuous echoes rise and roll,—
As down the hill it rushes on
And on towards its distant goal,
Round a far curve, and then is gone.

B. M. POWELL.

MR. NICHOLS'S TRILOGY

EARL SIMON (Grant Richards, 5s.) is a trilogy, or, more accurately speaking, a series of three plays of varying length dealing with the awakening to consciousness and self-rule of the English people. Mr. Nichols has chosen a big canvas, but he paints best when he paints bigly, and he has treated his subject with both fire and dignity. *Runnymede*, the first play, gives us King John signing Magna Charta; its theme is the wresting from the hands of an oppressor the sole arbitrament—the act of compulsory renunciation from which our liberties, such as they are, have sprung. *Earl Simon*, the second play, shows the consolidation and extension of the advantage gained in *Runnymede*, and *Viterbo*, the third play, treats of the human tragedy which, with a sinister persistence, seems to dog the well-being of those men who, at certain steps of the world's history, stand forth like living symbols of some angelic mind, contemplating and contriving the better happiness and governance of mankind.

Runnymede is a detached play, a prologue to rather than the genesis of what follows. King John is well drawn—a picturesque, if decadent, figure; a man with the beginning of madness in him. Like Nebuchadnezzar, he bites the grass, and in a volley of rage and regret and impotence, following upon his signing of the Charter, he speaks as Webster would have made him speak—a language which sweeps you away as you read it even if it leaves you wondering whether any actor could satisfactorily deliver it.

> I can behold the eagle, loftily flown,
> Struggling in some too vehement tide of wind,
> Bursting his scornful heart—the king of space
> Smit by an aery hazard! But in a trice
> A sweep of royal pinions bears him on,
> Careening to the sun. And shall a king
> Fare worse? Kings have especial providence,
> As eagles and as lions—but foxes, apes
> And carrion-crows fall sick of mists at night,
> Miasmas and the malady of girls!

> Would that I were the Enemy, the Dread,
> The subtle creeping Thing, the Pest, the Worm ! . . .
> Go, get you hence !

A very effective mad speech in the Elizabethan manner. But I feel that against this hectic rhetoric the calm, classic speeches of Stephen Langton shine as a more admirable example of dramatic verse. Indeed, the prelate's simple dignity is the best and truest thing in the play.

> Consider what it is to be a king :
> It is to sheave up in your single self
> The innumerable field that is your folk,
> Until, yourself transcended, you are they
> And they are you. In sight of God and man
> You stand for them : a mediator, a priest,
> An advocate, a shepherd . . .
> To be a king
> Is to be more a servant than a master.

Mr. Nichols is most original, most inspired and most memorable when he is most simple. Observe the felicity, the grace of the above lines. They are true *dramatic* blank verse—stately, easy to speak, easy to follow when spoken, and they bring to the scene that sense of august quietness which is one of the rarest, as it is one of the highest, moods of drama.

Earl Simon is a much more composite piece of writing. It is of considerably greater importance than *Runnymede*, and, though it holds some scenes which are on a lower level, as a whole it is an immensely better work. The outstanding feature of the play is the character of King Henry the Third—a very subtle piece of observation, picturesquely and surely done, full of deft lights and shadows. Mr. Nichols has got right into the skin of this crafty, vain, superstitious and entirely unreliable monarch. The characters of the Cardinal, Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste, and Eleanor are also skilfully and sympathetically etched. Particularly do I like the picture of the sick Grosseteste listening to the " ripple of wintry water in the dyke," but hearing, as he dies, the springtime blackbird's

call and seeing, in his imagination, the shadows of the returning swallows for ever passing along the orchard wall.

> Oh, the last dream
> Is sleep. . . .

This is a very noble contribution to our many death scenes.

The character of Simon de Montfort himself is less interesting. He is shown with the same sureness of moral purpose as Abraham Lincoln in Mr. Drinkwater's chronicle —a fine, mountainous figure; but Mr. Nichols has drawn him, it may be quite correctly, as a man with no sense of humour, and the dramatic presentation suffers in consequence. Where would Lincoln have been, theatrically, without his quaint, wry quips, his tragic grimaces and the whimsical smile that was so near akin to the tears of a soul? At the same time, although I see something of an affinity between Mr. Drinkwater's Lincoln and Mr. Nichols's Simon, the human romance of the latter presents a far more promising field for the actor than the odd, humdrum and rather painful domesticity of the American President. There is a fire and a youth in Simon's love for his strangely alike Eleanor which reconciles one to him as a man. "Cardinal," he cries, persuading the courtly old Italian Legate, about to sail for Rome and the Pope, to aid him in his love,

> Break up that priestly ice about your heart
> And let the drowning soul of you come through! . . .
> Is there no hour of all your youth's swift hours
> That steals at cockshut to your memory
> When looking deep into a fire of logs—
> Some hour of soft-hued springtime, with the mist
> Golden among the woods, and on the streams
> The dancing light, and in your heart an echo
> Of some wild song you never heard voice sing
> And yet you hear it singing through your soul?

And the Cardinal's reply—mark the exquisite simplicity of it:—

> There was a brown-haired girl at Fiesole
> Who sang upon the hills among the pines

Beneath the morning star and evening star.
It was the plague that took her.

This is so true that you can almost see the little, dark, wet patch on the red robe which marks the fall of an unaccustomed tear.

In the second scene of Act IV., which is set among the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, we see the first assembling of an English Parliament. It is a scene written with remarkable cumulative power, and would, I am convinced, act supremely well. Its emotions are subtle and varied and pitched in the right dramatic key to give effect to each change in the passions of the characters. I cannot refrain from quoting the little moment when the defeated, moody, futile King sits contemplating the Abbey he has helped to rear with something of an artist's joy :—

Villainous souls for less have been reprieved
From Hell, and I—I have not sinned deeply, Legate.
So do I hope to wear a majesty
Beyond my kinghood's in the day to come
When, dead, I yet shall live. I am a poet,
A troubadour whose canzons are of stone :
Arch rhymes to arch and flying groin to groin,
And, pillar after pillar, the refrains
Run through the modulations of the hymn
My hands rear to St. Peter and the Christ !

Simon de Montfort's speech to the assembly is, naturally, the high water mark of the play. One cannot read it without catching the infection of its inspiration. Its length alone forbids quotation, and to select from it would be to wrong the remainder. Moving, austere and spiritual, it is a splendid example of restrained eloquence. These words are true of all the best of Mr. Nichols's dramatic dialogue. Unfortunately, he has occasionally one great fault in which, when the true dramatic emotion deserts him, he is apt to indulge—the sin of rhetoric. It dehumanises his work, and, at a critical moment, will destroy the illusion he has been at such pains to create. A sudden, needless flamboyance, a bluster of words—and his men and women are in a trice

changed to puppets. The wires become instantly visible against the backcloth.

Mr. Nichols as a poet-dramatist stands midway between Mr. Masefield and Mr. Gordon Bottomley. He has an instinctive technique—the happiest gift of the dramatist—the sense of telling situation and apt word. And, when we turn to *Viterbo*, the third and final play of the series, we encounter him "wrapped in his virtue." I should call this one of the finest little plays in modern English drama. It is a *Medea* in miniature. We are shown Eleanor at Montargis, an old woman sitting in a sunlit garden, brooding on her past glories and dead wrongs, thinking only of her sons, of their future, of making peace for them with Edward of England. This she has almost contrived when news is brought that they have been guilty of a base and sacrilegious murder of revenge and are fugitives, outlaws with a price upon their heads. Stricken with a seizure, the old woman sits like stone while her daughter kneels beside her, crying out and clutching her and beseeching her to speak. I wish, before she passed away, that Genevieve Ward could have played this tremendous little tragedy. It is a fragment, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. If Mr. Nichols were never to write another line of dramatic verse the half-dozen pages of *Viterbo* would place him among the first three living English poets who have used the theatre as a vehicle for their art. The play begins, too, with a most beautiful lyric :—

> . . . She is more lovely than the lissom moon,
> White Melisande, who saw thy slackened sails
> From her enchanted terrace o'er the sea.
> Lie down and sleep, and render thanks to Heaven,
> Sick wanderer, that the sky is filled with stars
> And man has taught him how to foil the wind.
>
> To-morrow at the hour of silver wind
> Thy princess, pacing softlier than the moon
> Paces along a corridor of stars,
> Will come to where thou liest beneath thy sails.
> Thou wilt awaken to her face, thy Heaven,
> And to her hair, enmisted from the sea. . . .

She leans above thee and her eyes are stars
Greyer and greener than the green-grey sea
Where it is shadowed by the woven sails.
Her hair is blown about thee by the wind—
Sing this to-night, O Sirens, to the moon !—
And mouth burns down to mouth, and earth is Heaven.

No one who professes to collect the better and more representative contemporary literature—and I think it is a pleasant impeachment which most of us would care to acknowledge—has fulfilled his aim if he has not added *Earl Simon* to his bookshelves. Moreover—a mundane point, I am afraid—some day this first edition will be valuable.

EDWARD PERCY.

A STORMY AFTERNOON

THE further edges of the hills
Are veiled in flying drifts of rain,
While near at hand the little rills
Are gurgling in their throats again.

The river, that on balmy days
Has wound its placid way between
Low shelving banks, and wed the rays
Of sunlight to the mirrored green,

Now flows, a broadening spread of grey
With scarce a bend, while peewits fly
And hover, in their restless way
With petulant and plaintive cry.

The trees, as though a hundred woes
Surround them, sob out wild and loud,
And homing bands of rooks and crows
Caw-caw, a straggling sable crowd.

The weary farmer, plodding slow,
Comes up the sodden hillside steep
To food and rest, the cheery glow
Of firelight, and to dreamless sleep.

ELSIE H. RASPIN.

THE FARMHOUSE

THE farm, a small, sufficient world, lies bound
By ridge on ridge of hills that circle round
About nude acres whose brown furrows hold
The burden of the harvest's unborn gold.
And, like rough patchwork, shadowed woods and wide
Free uplands and grey vales stretch side by side
With brook-fed pasture-meadows, lushly green,
And rutted waggon-tracks trailed in between.

The time-scarred elm trees pack so closely round
The parent-dwelling that their boughs are wound
With circling smoke-wreaths, blue 'midst sunny leaves.
A hundred nests are in the roomy eaves,
And the red tiles are mossy, and the rains
Of thrice a hundred years have washed the panes
Of the sunk windows, and the timbers groan
With weariness, and cracked the lintel-stone.

Here dwell free men and healthful, and content
With the long peace of an existence spent
Where beats the pulse of primal things—the birth
And fruitage of mild beast and wholesome earth.
Firm-knit their hands and deft to thrust the plough
'Midst frosted fields and cleave a keen scythe through
The grasses in the fullness of the year,
As tend the lambing ewes with kindly care.

How spectral pale in cities breaks the spark
Of day through darkness that is doubly dark
With hanging fumes, but here light morning beats
The pane with eager fingers, and her sweets
Spreads forth, while her birds merry music sings
The heart awake, and in gay tumult rings
Above a world where cleanly winds and dew
Purge out the gross, and frame all things anew.

Man claims the earth as heritage, yet scars
Her tender brows with paving-stones, and mars
Her bird-filled woodlands, and must needs deface

With steely shapes her soft breasts' emerald grace.
Still the farm valiant stands, and quietly
Pleads kindly labours and simplicity.
Cities are tottering stones, but oft are found
God's footprints in the sown and yielding ground.

CECIL L. HEATH.

A MEETING

ONE Autumn evening in the crowded street,
Two ghosts, two lonely ghosts, did chance to meet.

Who, with a start, one to the other cried :—
" You ! "—for they had not met since they had died.

" What are you doing ? "—" As I used to do
Watching the shops, the passers-by. And you ? "

" The same "—" Have you forgotten ? "—" Everything
Except that we were lovers ten years last Spring."

(For these two had loved well until the smart
Of foolish words drove each from each apart.)

" And are you angry still ? "—" Angry ? "—" You said
You hated me."—" Hate dies when men are dead."—

" So much I have wanted you ! "—" And I and I ! "—
" To meet like this it was worth while to die ! "

Then these poor ghosts grew merry and forgot
That others still were flesh though they were not.

They saw the lamps burn mistily, the rain
Small, chill and cloudy on each window pane ;

The passers-by, the signs,—green, red and white,
The flaring shops, the dark November night,

The news-boys at each corner ; all around
The traffic roared above and underground,

Just as these two remembered—" But before
We never were so happy or loved more."

So on they glided, light as air, and free
From the old trouble and perplexity,

And came at last to their own door ;—they stood
A moment then passed lightly through the wood,

Floated up-stairs and entered their small room
Which seemed to greet them with its shabby gloom,

And in each other's arms lay, nor repined
Because the past was bitter and unkind,

But whispered sweet things under their chill breath
Mingling, in that swift moment, life and death.

Until the melancholy Autumn dawn
Peered through a curtain of thick mist withdrawn.—

The cold, sad dawn, creeping above the pile
Of sooty roofs and chimneys, mile on mile ;

And touched these two with its weak, sunless ray
In that deserted corner where they lay,

So that they weakened, faltered like a stream
Of dust dissolving in a stray sun-beam ;

And melted into nothingness—no trace
Or whisper of lost passion in that place.

Here the tale ends, for when day filled the cold
Grey room with chilly shafts of frozen gold,

Then all indeed was over—each poor ghost
Slain by the morning, swallowed up and lost !

MARGARET SACKVILLE.

IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

DO you still love the wolds from Stow
Down to Andoversford, and know
The little twisted stream that flows
Through Naunton Valley, the dog-rose
Abloom in hedgerows, and the cry
Of peewits on the plough ? O high
Stands lovely Birdlip and from Cleve
You used to look downhill and grieve
For cities dark with dusty tales ;—
One time you loved to gaze on Wales
From Froucester Hill. Fair Painswick smiles
On shy wood nymphs packed full of wiles !
At Nailsworth there are monks who pray
Our sins may all be washed away.—
And far away, and cool and deep,
Lies Tillbury Hollow sound asleep
Along the road that clambers after
Sleepy Campden's solemn laughter.
And on both sides down Stanway Hill
Laburnum is in flower, and still
The ragged lands and warrens blaze
With gorse ! A dusky bluebell haze
Clouds all the woods and fields are gold
With yellow buttercups. I'm told
Spring wakens in the heart desire,
And still you grind and sweat and tire,
I know it—in your stinking town,
Your loathly town, grime-choked and brown !
What's that you say ? That buds are green,
But is there money to be seen ?
And will they take a fool for hire
By some green wood in Gloucestershire ?

ANN KNOX.

A MYSTIC AND SOME REALISTS

IN modern times one rarely comes across a good ballad. To the uninitiated that short story of the middle ages appears, by reason of the stress laid upon weak syllables, to be an easy, slap-dash form which can be used successfully by any verse-writer. It is only when reading one written with such intensity of vision that every word tells that one realises what is the art of the ballad. *The Loss of the "Titanic,"* which Anna de Bary has included in her new volume of Lyrics (O'Connor) is a ballad that may be read centuries hence. That unforgettable event, the forerunner of the vast catastrophe of the European War, seized the imagination of the world, and the impression has been made permanent by the writer. Taken as a whole, the subjects in this book vary in interest, but there is music everywhere—not noise—and inspiration clearly conveyed by accomplished technique—not the modern, cheap substitute for poetry. Splendid decoration occasionally appears, unintentionally it seems, for with this author purpose comes first. Much has been said of the mystical quality of her poems, but the deeper meaning of those arranged in this volume under the heading of *Mystical Poems* will be by no means unintelligible to the average reader. In her section of *Songs of Outdoor Life* Mrs. de Bary sees farther than many of us. If she sings of the ever fresh and lovely earth, her mind is thinking of the countless dead races of man lying buried beneath its surface, or at night of the multitudinous hidden life of birds and beasts and insects. Another poem brings up the old question of whether true art needs for its growth the stimulant of hardships and suffering. Necessity may be the mother of invention, but is not the will to struggle more important than circumstance ? Poverty is, no doubt, a great incentive to the artist. But it is a cut-and-dry difficulty, and generally easier to deal with than the more insidious foe of enervating luxury or the many shackling conventions of ordinary social life which absorb untold energy and produce nothing at all. One wonders what Sir Philip Sydney or Swinburne (to take two names at random) might have

accomplished had they lived in poverty and felt a more definite resistance to their impulse of song. Leonardo da Vinci is another example of a genius born in easy circumstances, but everything was on his side in an age when art was all that mattered. If Shakespeare had been born a Tudor he might have acted in Court masques, yet never have taken the theatre seriously, and we doubt if he would have produced his plays. It is possible that he would only have been an enthusiastic patron of the arts and have written a few exquisite sonnets. Yet his powerful genius must inevitably have asserted itself in some other way. We quote Mrs. de Bary's poem, *Not in the Abundance of Things*, which forcibly gives her opinion on the matter—

Give men houses fair and costly,
    Raiment white,
Let the board be spread at even,
    The bed at night—
Will they sing ?

Give them stalled ox and fatlings,
    Oil and wine,
Give them purple, silk and linen,
    Let the sheets be fine—
They will not sing.

Paul and Silas thrown in prison,
    By men accurst,
Fettered, naked, bleeding, threatened,
    Hungry, cold, athirst—
These could sing.

In *Annotations*, by Susan Miles (Oxford University Press), the author does not express herself with any striking originality in her stricter metrical forms, but in her " rhymed free verse " in a minor key, which suits admirably the subjects she has chosen, she shows more individuality, especially in *Grass upon the House-tops*, a study and touching memoir of a characteristically English boy. Although she has not Anna de Bary's gift of singing, her episodes and sketches are gripping in interest. They are told in abrupt,

pithy little sentences, expressing the off-hand, modern manner of shyness in betraying emotion, and yet some subjects are dwelt upon with a surprising outspokenness. Part II. consists of studies in realism in free verse proper, which disclose satire, sometimes almost an acerbity, tempered by humour, and a penetrating observation of life; often there seems to be a sob and a laugh in the same line, with such sympathy does she see the pathos and humour of her fellow-adventurers in this world. Free verse has been touched upon in *Fauns at Prayer*, by Leolyn Louise Everett (The Bodley Head), who also finds it a suitable medium, but whilst Susan Miles is mainly interested in people, this writer is chiefly concerned with things and phenomena. Certain of her poems are very ordinary, but others have a delicate fragility as if woven out of scented flowers and moonshine. There is a good deal that is commonplace in *Beauty for Ashes and other Poems*, by Hilda Roseveare (Sharp). Her songs of the months, however, pleasantly convey each characteristic of the four-weekly changes of the year, and greater vigour and originality are to be found in the poems written in Cornish dialect.

P. M .P.

A SPRING SONG

COME out! Come out! You people who are dwellers in the towns
Come out and leave the traffic to walk with me the downs.
Leave all the tired pavement for the heather and the pine,
For all the countryside is God's—and that is yours and mine.

The wind shall be our leader and the cloud shall be our guide,
The dreaming downs shall beckon us to climb their dimpled side,
The birds shall tell us secrets as we climb our upward way,
For all the world laughs with us upon this April day.

F. V. GODWIN.

AN AMERICAN SECTION

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

WE are happy to announce that Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, whose graphic American letter in a recent issue of THE POETRY REVIEW was quoted widely on both sides of the Atlantic, will take charge of an American section which is inaugurated with this issue. We are thus able to give effect to a long cherished plan for extending the scope of THE POETRY REVIEW and linking up poetic interests which was delayed by the war.

During the earlier part of the war THE POETRY REVIEW was widely read and used in the United States, and a number of State Schools drew largely upon it for small anthologies of poems that illustrated the spirit of Britain during the great struggle, but during the later period communications were seriously interrupted and it is only lately that we have been able to unite the broken threads and resume plans for essential developments which our New York colleague has most cordially and practically adopted and expanded.

Mrs. Bartlett has given evidence of the keenness and success with which she associates poetry with actual life. She is identified with no coterie and is no literary recluse or bigot, but a woman of many active interests. Although she has published many poems, she is not associated with any of the many freakish schools of verse that are sometimes taken to represent the native American poetic spirit. She is a daughter of one of the founders of the famous New York *Independent*, and she has organised national activities in various directions, notably national defence.

In a recent issue the *Literary Digest*, in quoting Mrs. Bartlett's opinion on international questions, refers to her as "prominently interested in national defence movements," which is only one of the indications that her national activities in the United States have won her recognition as one of the moulders of American thought.

The records of the Congress of the United States show that she initiated movements which greatly assisted the U.S. Government during the war, having started to organise the American women for national defence and war work as early as 1915, when she foresaw the need of arousing the country to the dangers of war. One of her national activities was the founding of the Treasure and Trinket Fund, of which she was chairman until the end of the war, her committees including the representative women of America. The purpose of the fund was to supply the needs of the American aviators.

The American Section will be an integral part of THE POETRY REVIEW and not a separate edition, and will enable THE POETRY REVIEW to more adequately represent the best interests of poetry on both sides of the Atlantic. It will be of particular value in presenting and interpreting American poetry—vigorous, vital, striving after the expression of a great young nation that is formulating its spiritual independence while adding to the poetic value and import of the English language—to the British section of the English speaking peoples which is apt to ignore the significance of the great addition to our poetic literature that is being made by our co-heirs and co-workers in English poetry. On both sides the Atlantic THE POETRY REVIEW will now be the recorder and interpreter of both branches of the English speaking race, and, as poetry is our surest, strongest link, this development has a political and sociological significance.

The editorial programme will be gradually unfolded by our Associate Editor, but at the outset we may say that one feature of the American Section will be a regular spirited and reasoned survey of the uses of poetry in America and the poetic output. New poems representative of the best American work will be published, together with a series of poems on distinctively American subjects.

As America supports poetic efforts more liberally than we do here, material encouragement being given by wealthy men, it is possible that our modest "premiums" will be augmented by generous offers of awards by New

York business men who are interested in and concerned for the development of the poetic expression of American life and aspiration.

We shall gain, too, on the material side in addition to the expansion of the value and influence of THE POETRY REVIEW. We shall have a more direct claim on the vast support to such a magazine that the United States can provide.

The announcement of this development in the American papers has already brought in several hundred new subscribers. When our plans mature we may confidently expect this number to be increased to thousands. The annual postal subscription of two dollars is regarded as an almost nominal contribution to the production costs of a special magazine of the size and format of THE POETRY REVIEW, with its limited advertisement revenue although its appeal is to the general public and not to the academic or dilettante reader.

America is applying financial stimulus to the production of new verse in a continually increasing degree. We have been advised that Mr. Witter Bynner, himself a poet who has gained his laurels, is offering, through the Poetry Society of America, one hundred dollars for the best poem or group of poems not exceeding 200 lines by an undergraduate of any American college or university. Other undergraduate prizes of one hundred dollars and fifty dollars are being offered through Prof. Jay B. Hubbell, South Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, whose new *Introduction to Poetry* is reviewed in this issue. *Contemporary Poetry* is responsible for a group of annual prizes, including a Gene Stratton-Porter Special Prize of fifty dollars, a Joseph Galahad Sonnet Prize of twenty-five dollars, and five ordinary first prizes of forty dollars each, and five second prizes of twenty dollars each, which are not awarded to the editor or his relatives. A thousand dollars are being offered by Yale University for a song to take the place of "Bright College Years," which generations of Yale men have sung to the tune of "Die Wacht am Rhine," now intolerable to both students and professors.

AMERICAN SECTION:

Internationalism of American Poetry

AS we scan the long list of titles of the season's poetical works announced by American publishers we are once more struck by the internationalism of American poetry.

As in the past, American and British poets take the lion's share of the titles to be issued.

The American poetry lover, like the American publisher and the American editor, has always welcomed good poetry written in the English language without inquiry regarding its origin.

As we read poems emanating from American publishers, we are apt to pass from Edwin Arlington Robinson's *Roman Bartholow* to John Masefield's *The Dream*, without a thought to nationality, because, I suppose, Penn-Raven who—

> having found the soul
> In Bartholow that ailed him, had with ease
> Ineffable healed it,

seems to have been of the same good Anglo-Saxon stock as Dr. Charles H. O. Daniel, the Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, to whom John Masefield refers in his poem :—

> In wisest age, in all its happiest bloom
> Deep in the red and black of books immerst.

They could both have emanated from Oxford, or from Mr. Robinson's alma mater, Harvard !

Poets, unless they have other claims to eminence, can only gain access to the sacred pages of *Who Is Who* after time has pronounced itself on the excellency of their poetry. In the meantime we must depend on the publishers to tell us who the poets are and where they come from, since we cannot invite them all to grace our gatherings, and many are too modest to tell us about themselves.

* * *

Nor can we take for granted that a poet is American

because an American bird is mentioned in a poem, as is the case in the following from Muna Lee's *Sea Change* :—

> I would sing with my lips to the lips of a sea shell,
> I would sing to the thrush and the cardinal bird ;
> I would sing though the singing breezes heard me,
> Though the tall field grasses and light rains heard.
>
> For I have a song is fit for the singing,
> And a theme unmatched till the world be done,
> Though never a heart on the wide earth heed it
> But mine and another one !

* * *

I am hoping in this short survey of the origin and evolution of American poetry to place for our consideration, briefly, a few of the prime factors in the upbuilding of this greatest of arts in America and some of the poetical milestones along the way.

We are fortunate in considering this subject to be able to definitely surround it with our minds because of the youth of our nation. The birth of American poetry and its early development have taken place since the invention of the printing press, and therefore are safely recorded and not matters of conjecture. In other older nations the origin and well-springs of their national poetry are lost in the mists of time through not having been so recorded.

Questions concerning the origin of American poetry carry the mind without doubt to the British Isles, while in its evolution this new power became increasingly played upon by the many other forces conveyed through American immigration from the many centres of the Old World.

It is to those travellers from Britain, who left gentility and affluence and lost themselves in the forests of the New World, and who spread the white race throughout America, despite the fact that Indians hunted the continent over, this wreath belongs ! Leaders in a wilderness, but none the less leaders, " Palatines of the border."

Let us analyse, in passing, some of the early influences operating at this time in America of the birth of American poetry. The frontier of New York was truly a dark and

dangerous border, and the voice of the Indian, with its peculiar eloquence, was heard in its environs, but plainly we recognise that even in this barbaric scene America was not nurtured on illiteracy as were some of the older nations. He who runs may read, there is no uncertainty on this point.

In the Colonial history of the North and of the South the investigator will find full satisfaction for his inquiring mind.

The planters of Colonial Virginia and the Puritans of New England are the fathers of the first American poets, and of British origin.

Men of sturdiest patriotism from Great Britain and Ireland, who in their divine discontent immigrated to the New World with the spirit of the true Anglo-Saxon impulse towards freedom.

All Americans must ever be proud of this early flowering of great poetry on this soil of America!

Let us now sweep our burning glass over the years and poets! From Wm. Cullen Bryant (dates 1794–1878), born in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts, which is referred to as the Mother State of Poets, whose longevity well-nigh obscures the life-arc of Edgar Allen Poe (1809–1849), a University of Virginia student, we sweep through a fine forest of great poetical timber, to Walt Whitman!

Whitman's advent, we may consider, marks that time when the immense struggle with the forces of nature in American conditions first was made expressive in poetry. From then on we are safely carried on the swelling stream of American poetry until we reach the rapids of modern life, where we all easily remember beacons that have served to inspire and direct us through the great writings of our poets. Finding ourselves after this journey, among our contemporaries, we note that here the difficulty of choosing is a well-nigh smothering task . . . there are so many, and they are all producing so much, we are in the toils of the delights and disappointments of immediate production.

After a while, when Time will have touched these names

with the wand of distance, though this method remain a mystery, the results are compelling!

* * *

How many of the poetical stars that stud the American literary firmament in this year and generation are likely to survive the test of years?

Who are the American poets of yesternight and of to-day who stand shoulder to shoulder with the founders of the various American poetical schools of the different periods?

Here we do not have the advantage of seeing the result of the pruning of Time, and as we seek to pass judgment we find much that is worthy and—oh, so much that is not worthy, and its only *raison d'être* is that it is one of the evidences that poetry is popular.

The answer to this question should be based on the opinion of many—and we may undertake to ascertain this in the near future as far as can be ascertained by a referendum.

Awaiting the judgment by referendum we will withhold comments on the liberal output of Spring American Poetry, confining ourselves, as the *New York Times* has done, to announcing that:—

Appletons are bringing out *The Poetic Procession*, by J. F. Roxburgh; *The Gothic Rose*, by W. R. Childe (reviewed in the March issue of THE POETRY REVIEW); *Oxford Poetry*, 1921 *and* 1922 (two volumes), Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verse* translated into Latin by T. R. Glover, and Ruth Comfort Mitchell's *Narratives in Verse*, the latter being the ninth volume of their Library of Verse. Dodd, Mead, announce for March publication, *A Hundred Poems*, by William Watson; and *Walkers*, by Hazen Hall. The Dutton list comprises *Prophet and Fool*, by Louis Golding; *When the Tide Comes In*, by Clement Wood; and *Bubbles of Gold*, by Arthur Crew Inman. Brentano's have issued *Hilda*, by Frances Gibbs Keith. Boni and Liveright are publishing *You and Me*, by Paul Geraldy; *Rock-Flower*, by Jeanne Robert Foster; and *Dublin Days*, by L. A. G. Strong.

Doran announces *Black Armor*, by Elinor Wylie. *A Book of British and American Verse*, edited by Henry van Dyke, and *So There!* by Franklin P. Adams, make up the Doubleday, Page list. Harcourt, Brace and Co. are bringing out *Roast Leviathan*, by Louis Untermeyer; *Maine Coast*, by Wilbert Snow; and *Contemporary German Poetry*, an anthology chosen and translated by Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky. *The Hour of Magic, and Other Poems*, by W. H. Davis, is Harpers' only poetry offering for the season. Henry Holt and Co. are issuing *Last Poems*, by A. E. Housman; *Selected Poems*, by George Sterling; *A Child's Day*, juvenile poems, by Walter de la Mare, and *Selected Poems*, by Robert Frost. Houghton Mifflin publish *Preludes*, by John Drinkwater; *Magic Flame and Other Poems*, by Robert Haven Schauffler; and *The Jar of Dreams*, by Lila Cabot Perry. The Knopf list includes *April Twilights and Later Verses*, by Willa Cather; and *Fox Footprints*, by Elizabeth J. Coatsworth. Longmans, Green announce *The Poetical Works of Andrew Lang*, in four volumes, edited by Mrs. Lang. *The Fairies Up-to-Date*, by Edward and Joseph Anthony, will appear shortly from the press of Little, Brown. Robert M. McBride announces *Sons of the Silence*, by F. L. Holmes, and a second series of *Little Poems from the Greek*, translated by W. Leaf.

Macmillan's poetry list is a long one, including *Roman Bartholow*, by E. A. Robinson; *Selected Poems*, by John Masefield; *Collected Poems*, by Vachel Lindsay; *The Great Dream*, by Marguerite Wilkinson; *Sea Change*, by Muna Lee; *Poems from Life*, edited by Oliver Herford; *Voices of the Southwest*, by Milton R. Greer; *Daily Bread*, by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson; and *The Poet's Year*, an anthology compiled by Ada Sharpley. Putnams are publishing *The Ballad of St. Barbara and Other Poems*, by G. K. Chesterton; *Sonnets from the Silence*, by Minnie Ferris Hauenstein; *The Poetical Works of Joaquin Miller*, edited by Stuart P. Sherman; and the fifth volume of *Georgian Poetry*. *Poems of a Salvationist*, by Mrs. Brigadier Irent Arnold, is Fleming H. Revell's offering. Scribners are bringing out *Roosevelt*

as the Poets Saw Him, edited by Charles Hanson Towne ; *The Poems of Santayana*, and *The Poems of Alice Meynell.*

Poetry at the U.S. Capitol.

It is evident from the general interest shown in the part of my letter printed in The Poetry Review for September-October, 1922, which quoted the poetic expressions of the members of our Congress who summon poetry to their aid to emphasise their arguments, that readers and reviewers of The Poetry Review would like to follow the popular use of poetry at the U.S. Capitol.

"Do not overlook mentioning the States they come from," is the suggestion of a reader who shares the feeling of interest in knowing whether the Congressman who invokes the power of poetry to win support for pending legislation comes from the Northernmost Maine, or cultured New England, or from the metropolitanised New York, the industrious middle States, the rustic western States, or from the sunny Pacific States.

Our interest in Anglo-Saxon welfare leads us to reflect when a member of the House of Representatives, in reviewing world events and the problems facing the Anglo-Saxon people, quotes Lowell's solemn lines with such an appropriate introduction and conclusion :—

"We involuntarily shrink from the serious study of economic questions with which we are comparatively unfamiliar. It is irksome and subjects us to criticism of various kinds. Personally, in my own periods of complaisance with things as they are, I have gotten inspiration from the lines of the American poet, James Russell Lowell beginning :—

> Said Christ Our Lord, 'I will go and see
> How the men, my brethren, believe in me.'
> He passed not again through the gate of birth
> But made Himself known to the children of earth.

"The Anglo-Saxon peoples have gone a long way since that poem, which so powerfully influenced the late W. T. Stead, was written, but, my friends, the next time you

watch the glory of the winter storm, in warmth and comfort, consider to what percentage of the people that storm means only misery and hardship. That thought has often made me feel with terrible distinctness the long, long hill humanity has got to climb to relieve the agony of the world.

"I am confident the subject of these remarks is entitled to our most painstaking consideration. I am not so confident that the suggestions embodied in my Bill even approximate a solution. I have an abiding conviction that this great body will at the proper time approach the matter with the caution which it demands, but with courage, with resolution, with vision, and with hope."

Seldom has the forcefulness of poetry to add poignance to an argument been better used than it was by Senator A. Osmley Stanley, of Kentucky, in the following :—

"The Senator from South Carolina has very justly expressed regret that there is not greater interest in so vital a matter as an increase in the cost of sewing thread to the sewing women, to say nothing of the factories and mills of the country. The woman who is compelled to earn her livelihood with her needle has commanded the commiseration of mankind since Hood pictured her :—

> In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
> Sewing at once with a double thread a shroud as well as a shirt.

"That woman still sits in unwomanly rags, in poverty, hunger, and dirt, but these money-mad grabbers in the . . ."

Representative Samuel A. Kendall, from Pennsylvania, in expressing a tribute in the House of Representatives to the late Senator William Evans Crow, said :—

"As I stood at the open grave and looked into the saddened faces of the countless friends, I realised there could be no higher eulogy of man than that the humblest pay him tribute in tears, and my mind could but revert to the immortal ode of the great Tennyson on the death of the Duke of Wellington :—

> On God and godlike men we build our trust,
> Hush, the dead march wails in the people's ears ;

The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears;
The black earth yawns ; the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
He is gone who seemed so great—
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him."

Representative John E. Rankin, from Mississippi, speaking of the late Representative Charles R. Connell, of Pennsylvania, accentuated his tribute with a poetic quotation, as follows :—

" I know nothing of his religious affiliations, I know nothing of his fraternal connections, but my experience with him in a practical way led me to believe that he was more or less a disciple of that philosophy enunciated by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, when she said :—

So many gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind ;
When just the art of being kind
Is all this sad world needs."

An epic on youth and things that youth gives us and time takes away, was contributed by Senator Claude A. Swanson, from Virginia, who, recalling his friendship with Representative Henry D. Flood, of Virginia, which had lasted thirty-five years, said, in part :—

" How vividly do I recall these halcyon college days, so bright, so joyous, made doubly so by dear ' Hal,' as we all lovingly called him ! The chivalric feelings of friendship and admiration then formed never cease, but continue through life and gather strength with each receding year. How sweet and inspiring are the days of early youth,

sparkling with unselfish friendship, gleaming with lofty aspirations and high ideals, unburdened by cares and responsibilities, with young blood rapidly coursing through the veins, and we looking upon life as through a gilded veil, and everything appearing so bright, so pleasing. The poet has well expressed it :—

> We are stronger and better under manhood's sterner reign,
> But still we feel that something sweet,
> Followed youth with flying feet,
> And will never come again.
>
> Something beautiful has vanished and we sigh for it in vain,
> We behold it everywhere,
> On the earth and in the air,
> But it never comes again.

"This quality marked him as an aggressive leader, cheered and loved by an enthusiastic following. He hewed his way to the front with the battleaxe of the warrior. He despised preferment obtained by the insinuating arts of the demagogue. His chosen place of action was on the field of battle, and not in the cloister of intrigue and diplomacy. He was the Rupert of Virginia Democracy —bold, courageous, and daring. He cheerfully and proudly wore scars obtained by fidelity to friendship or for a cause espoused.

"He died with his armour on, as chivalric, as brave, and worthy a companion as ever contended for a cause. His life illustrated forcibly and completely those striking lines from one of America's greatest poets :—

> The heights by great men reached and kept
> Were not attained by sudden flight,
> But they, while their companions slept,
> Were toiling upwards in the night."

The eloquent Senator J. Thomas Heflin, of Alabama, one of the members of the Senate who has the rare faculty of being able to express himself impressively on almost any subject, and makes extensive use of poetry, original and

otherwise, employed a poetic quotation effectively to emphasise his argument against the evils of political influence in the banking system, as follows :—

" Mr. President, I thank my good friend from Georgia for his very valuable suggestions. I rejoice to see him back in his seat again. I am glad that he has gained strength enough from his recent illness to come back to his post of duty, where he can fight the battles of his people.

" Mr. President, as the Senator from Georgia proceeded I was reminded by what he said about the fight that was made back yonder by Jackson to keep the banking system out of politics, and there came to my mind the little poem :—

> Freedom's battle, once begun,
> Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
> Though baffled oft, is ever won."

In a lighter mood, interesting in its application, we find Senator Holm O. Bursum, of New Mexico, seeking to head off unprofitable discussion on the floor of the Senate with a Chinese poem, as follows :—

" This proceeding reminds me very much of a Chinese poem which, when translated, reads as follows :—

> In speech he is a wonder,
> How small are his games ;
> How loud is his thunder
> How little it rains ! "

To this, Senator Thaddeus H. Caraway, of Arkansas, retorted :—

" May I just say that so long as an objection can save its raining it will not rain ! "

Biblical Subject Wins " Nation's " Poetry Contest.

We always welcome an opportunity of going back to Milton, and we find it refreshing to have the opportunity of reviewing Biblical subjects. But when a poetry contest

is held by a decidedly progressive, unorthodox weekly magazine dedicated mainly to international political subjects, like the *Nation* (New York), Miltonian verses and the Scripture are the last things we could think of as the subject matter of the winning poem. Hence our surprise to see the *Nation*'s prize awarded to a verse interpretation of the Biblical story of David, Bathsheba, her husband Uriah the Hittite, and Nathan the prophet. We reproduce the first canto :—

David sang to his hooknosed harp :
" The Lord God is a jealous God !
His violent vengeance is swift and sharp !
And the Lord is King above all gods !

" Blest be the Lord, through years untold,
The Lord Who has blessed me a thousand fold !

" Cattle and concubines, corn and hives
Enough to last me a dozen lives.

" Plump, good women with noses flat,
Marrowful blessings, weighty and fat.

" I wax in His peace like a pious gourd,
The Lord God is a pleasant God,
Break mine enemy's jaw, O Lord !
For the Lord is King above all gods ! "

His hand dropped slack from the tunable strings,
A sorrow came on him—a sorrow of kings.

A sorrow sat on the arm of his throne,
An eagle sorrow with claws of stone.

" I am merry, yes, when I am not thinking,
But life is nothing but eating and drinking.

" I can shape my psalms like daggers of jade,
But they do not shine like the first I made.

" I can harry the heathen from North to South,
But no hot taste comes into my mouth.

" My wives are comely as long-haired goats,
But I would not care if they cut their throats !

" Where are the maids of the desert tents
With lips like flagons of frankincense ?

" Where is Jonathan ? Where is Saul ?
The captain-towers of Zion wall ?

" The trees of cedar, the hills of Nod,
The kings, the running lions of God ?

" Their words were a writing in golden dust,
Their names are myrrh in the mouths of the just.

" The sword of the slayer could never divide them—
Would God I had died in battle beside them ! "

The Lord looked down from a thunder-clap.
(The Lord God is a crafty God.)
He heard the strings of the shrewd harp snap,
(The Lord Who is King above all gods.)

He pricked the king with an airy thorn,
It burnt in his body like grapes of scorn.

The eyelids roused that had drooped like lead.
David lifted his great, tired head.

The thorn stung at him, a fiery bee,
" The world is wide. I will go and see
From the roof of my haughty palace," said he.

More than four thousand manuscripts by about fifteen hundred writers were submitted to the *Nation's* poetry contest. The judges, the editors of the *Nation*, after careful consideration have awarded the prize to Stephen Vincent Benét for his poem, *King David*. Mr. Benét is one of the younger American poets, being still in his early twenties. He is a graduate of Yale where he won several poetry prizes offered by the university. He is the author of *Five Men and Pompey*, *Heavens and Earth*, and two

novels, *The Beginning of Wisdom* and *Young People's Pride.* Among the poems submitted, honourable mention were made of *Birmingham* by Clement Wood, *Saecla Ferarum* by William Ellery Leonard, *I Was Made of This and This* and *I Never Looked on Helen's Face* by Gertrude Robison Ross, *New York City* by Maxwell Bodenheim, *Formation* by Frank Ernest Hill, *Of Glow-Worms* by Dorothy Wyckoff.

A New Apostle of Poetry.

As might be expected from the splendid record of the incomparable *Literary Digest*, the new monthly magazine, *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, issued by the same publisher and edited by Clifford Smyth, the noted literary editor, besides being a most substantial review of books on every other subject, deals liberally with poetry. The *Literary Digest's* full-page review of my article in The Poetry Review, "What America is Doing for Poetry," some months ago, had emphasised the fact, first brought out in The Poetry Review, that poetry plays an important part at the U.S. Capitol. It was doubly interesting, therefore, to find in opening a recent issue of the *Literary Digest International Book Review*, a full-page given to an illustrated poem by Amy Lowell, entitled *The Congressional Library*, the illustration showing the Washington Capitol, aptly interpreted also in words by Miss Lowell's lines :—

> Where else in all America are we so symbolized
> As in this hall ?
> White columns polished like glass,
> A dome and a dome,
> A balcony and a balcony,
> Stairs and the balustrades to them.
> Yellow marble and red slabs of it,
> All mounting, spearing, flying into colour.
> Colour round the dome and up to it,
> Colour curving, kite-flying, to the second dome,
> Light, dropping, pitching down upon the colour,
> Arrow-falling upon the glass-bright pillars,
> Mingled colours spinning into a shape of white pillars,

Fusing, cooling, into balanced shafts of shrill and interthronging light.
This is America. . . .

Among other noteworthy poetic features, one is impressed by a review of Paul de Reul's *L'Œuvre de Swinburne*, by Richard Le Gallienne, covering three large size pages, with three illustrations, Mr. Le Gallienne's latest book, *A Jongleur Strayed*, being in turn reviewed by Zona Gale ; and three pages are given to Lloyd Morris to review current volumes of poetry by Professor John Erskine, Padraic Colum, Herbert S. Gorman, John Peale Bishop and Edmund Wilson, jr., Roscoe W. Brink, Edmund Blunden, with mention of the collection of poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Amy Lowell, Vachel Lindsay, Conrad Aiken, Sara Teasdale, Louis Untermeyer—and of volumes which are also awaiting my review, namely—*Thy Sea Is Great, Our Boats Are Small*, by Henry Van Dyke ; *A Tree With a Bird In It*, by Margaret Widdemer ; *Because of Beauty*, by Angela Morgan, and others. This is but a sample of the excellent material found in each number of the *Literary Digest International Book Review*. It is apparent that the poetry world will soon be as profoundly indebted to this publication as it is to its companion publication, the *Literary Digest*.

Poems to Call Attention to Novels.

There was a time when we almost expected a poetic quotation at the head of each chapter of a novel, and while the novelists did not state to what extent the poetic quotations had served as an inspiration, it was obvious that the quotations were stepping-stones. Appreciation for what poetry may do for a novel was shown recently by Frederick F. Van de Water, the book reviewer of the *New York Tribune*, when he introduced and called attention to his review of Robert Keable's novel, *Peradventure*, with this poem :—

THE SEEKERS

They held a hunt for God.
  They thought to trap Him, dreaming on His throne.
  In rubble of old faiths, long overthrown,
They searched for trace of footprints where He trod.
  Full long they sought with theologic care
  For sign of Him and, seeking, marked not where
The fire of spring ran green along the sod.

They cried aloud His name.
  " If God there were," they said, " our senses tell
  That here, serene and august, would He dwell."
They called again, and when no answer came :
  " If God there be He cannot hear men pray ;
  He stands aloof and far." They went their way,
Unheeding, past the crocus's bowls of flame.

They said : " He cannot be.
  Brahm, Christus, Ormazd and the Bhodisat
  Are barren names for things we know are not
Contrived by men to soothe man's misery ;
  Bright baubles swung to cheer a grieving child ;
  There is no God."—And He Who heard them smiled
And quickened with His breath the cherry tree.

Who Selects the " Samples " ?

When we receive publishers' announcements of forthcoming volumes of poetry with a " sample " of the contents we wonder whether the author was asked to select the " sample," or whether the poetry editor selected it—or whose selection was it ? The next thought is—does the " sample " do justice to the contents of the book ? Here is a " sample " from *Bubbles of Gold*, by Arthur Crew Inman, the author of *Red Autumn*. It is called *We Went to Sea*, and we shall await with interest to compare it with the other " bubbles of gold " in the book :—

We went to sea one summer night
You, and my boat, and I :
And the fog came down and hid the land,
And the moon shone still and high.
So we laughed youth's laugh, and sought afar

Out where the lone waves sigh :
And I sometimes wish we'd never returned,—
You, and my boat, and I.

When the Poet-Reviewer Reviews the Poetry Reviewer's Book.

To do justice to poetry some of the leading American newspapers are turning leading American poets into reviewers, and we are regaled with reviews of poetic works running from two columns to a page in length. The task of reviewing another poet's works is probably not more delicate than Richard Le Gallienne had when he was asked by the *New York Times* to review *The Poet's Poet*, by Elizabeth Atkins, Ph.D., and such a task of a poet reviewer reviewing a poetry reviewer's book was seldom better done, as will be noted from the following excerpts :—

" The sub-title to Dr. Elizabeth Atkins's book runs *Essays on the Character and Mission of the Poet as Interpreted in English Verse of the Last One Hundred and Fifty Years.*" From this it will be seen at once that Dr. Atkins has taken unto herself a theme that has not merely an academic interest, but is a theme very much alive just now, when the poet is cutting so conspicuous a figure in the social order, and even in the body politic. Sang O'Shaughnessy in that famous *Ode* which strikingly sums up the poet's attitude to his high calling :—

" We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams—
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams :
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems."

That this is no idle boast our time has recently given sensational proof. D'Annunzio's claim to be a modern world-shaker can hardly be disputed, any more than the fact that the Free State of Ireland is largely the work of Irish poets. Is not Mr. W. B. Yeats, dreamer of dreams if ever there was one, also a member of the Irish Senate ? And has not M. Paderewski, who, as a music-maker, belongs to the

poetic brotherhood, proved a very forceful President of Poland? Modern "Freedom" generally, since its dawn at the end of the eighteenth century, has had poets for its chief inspirers, and Tennyson's passionate claim for "The Poet" has as much truth in it as poetry.

The poet, even when personally modest, has always thus held an exalted opinion of his "mission" and of himself as a "vessel of the divine." Nor can it in fairness be urged against the contemporary poet that he is in this respect at all behind his predecessors. Never, indeed, has the poet been more arrogant than now, more sure of his superiority to his fellow-men, as well as of his vast importance to them, an attitude which he too often upholds with impudence rather than with the dignity proper to his position as a "vates." However, as Mrs. Browning wrote:—

> "Alas! near all the birds
> Will sing at dawn—and yet we do not take
> The chaffering swallow for the holy lark."

Poetry Editor Plus Literary Editor.

Personal interest has a pivotal effect on our point of view. Our interest in poetry makes us ripple with satisfaction over the increasing list of new poetical works, while the general literary reviewer, to whom each book of poetry only means more work, groans helplessly and lets the reader feel that he would not mind if poets were relegated to Parnassus—or some other place—before they could get their poetical thoughts in book form. To be fair to the literary editors, we acknowledge that no other expression of literature is so insistent. "We receive all the way from one hundred to five hundred poems each week," says the editor of a metropolitan paper. We ripple with joy at such demonstration of poetic popularity, but the literary editor takes our rippling as a sort of expression of satanic satisfaction over his effort to keep afloat in the flood of poetic manuscripts. The only fair solution to this problem is to have a poetry editor in addition to the literary editor, and in the near future we are going to make such a suggestion to the editors of those American newspapers and magazines that have not already established a poetry chair in their *sanctum sanctorum.*

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

ON RECENT ANTHOLOGIES

" I sipped each flow'r."
—(Captain Macheath.)

IMAGINE a vast garden, in which all the flowers in the world—the humble and the haughty, the blushing and the pale, buds of spring and blossoms of summer—grow together in a chaos of perfume and colour, a wilderness of delicate shapes and hues. Such a garden will stretch for miles; one can never tire of wandering in it. And such a garden will ultimately reduce the flower-lover to despair; for though he live a thousand years, he can never hope to realise more than an infinitesimal fragment of its delights. Each satiny petal, each golden stamen, each minute tracery of silver vein, holds fresh wonder for touch and sight.

So it is in the great library of English poetry. To know any one poet as we would like to know him—to apprehend and appreciate every fine shade of feeling, every subtle modulation of thought—is a sheer impossibility.

. . . Into our garden, where we stand bewildered and irresolute, overcome by its magnificence and profusion, not knowing which way to turn, or where to begin, comes the anthologist, to gather his morning posy. Like the bee, he is no respecter of persons, and goes equally readily to great and small, proud and shy. He floats from border to border, stopping only to take the sweetest honey from the choicest blooms. And though we cannot have all, we can, in following him, at least choose something of the best from the great variety of flowers around us.

Of the many books before us, it is not hard to say which will be of the greatest permanent interest and value to the lover of literature. Sir Henry Newbolt's *English Anthology* (Dent, 10s. 6d.) in aim and achievement stands high above the rest. Its popularity is already sufficient to make praise superfluous, and we only mention it here in order to commend to its readers the slim volume of critical notes which accompanies the 1922 impression. These notes contain just what is necessary to the general reader for the full appreciation of Sir Henry Newbolt's book, and will be of particular value to the student on account of their terseness and suggestiveness. The compiler arouses in one that desire to search for oneself that treasure-house from which he draws, which is the proof of a sincere and critical appreciation.

* * * *

The more recent anthologies deal largely with the work of living poets. What is best in any one period will differ for every indi-

vidual mind, and it is of course futile to lay down hard and fast laws as to what should be included and what rejected. It is not entirely the fault of the anthologist of modern verse that we search his pages in vain for the spacious utterance, the spontaneous music, the unforgettable felicity of phrase, to which his predecessors have accustomed us. And judging by these volumes, the spirit of contemporary poetry would seem to show both promise and disappointment, with little actual achievement. They consist almost wholly of carefully and patiently wrought verse which has its feet set firmly on the ground and its eyes fixed steadily on the things of sense. The poems illustrate the *via media* between artificiality of mood and genuine inspiration, often degenerating into the strained and studied cleverness of the former, too frightened of sentimentality to acknowledge the influence of the latter. At their best, they miss greatness by a hair's breadth.

This is particularly evident in Mr. Seymour's *Miscellany of Poetry*, 1922, but a selection of this kind was badly needed, and it is admirably made. Mr. Seymour mentions nearly every name of any note in his period; he confines himself to poems which have not hitherto been published in book form, but are gleaned from periodicals and manuscripts. He is perhaps inclined to ignore the older generation, but he shows several young writers at their best, and he has managed to include a few songs, like Ralph Hodgson's *Silver Wedding*, from voices rarely heard. It is a collection which will interest initiates, but if those who know little or nothing of modern poetry read it with the intention of acquainting themselves with its general trend, they will probably be misled. It is an anthology which must from its nature include much that is below the standard of the very best in recent verse.

Mr. Seymour's preface disarms criticism, but Mr. Caldwell's provokes it. He claims for his volume the ambitious title of *The Golden Book of Modern English Poetry* (Dent, 7s. 6d.). We opened it with high hopes—only to find that Mr. Caldwell has failed in his difficult task by reason of a certain lack of discrimination. He is too easily pleased, and finds room too readily for much that, though far from negligible, can hardly be placed in the higher rank, even according to present-day standards. The purpose of the collection is "to show that the most significant poetry of our time is either classical or romantic in character, and not, as some critics would have it, of the realistic school." We are in entire agreement with this statement and heartily commend the purpose; but at the same time we think it more of a hindrance than a help in compiling an anthology, the primary aim of which should be, after all, to gather

together all that is most beautiful, and not to seek, in so doing, to prove an assertion or illustrate a theory. Mr. Caldwell's book suffers in another respect. Choice, arrangement, and presentment all influence the reader. It is surely not always true that " there is no flower which does not gain something in beauty when another flower is set beside it." The glory of the tulip eclipses the shyer loveliness of the daisy, and one gets no pleasure from a handful of daffodils thrust into a bowl of hothouse roses. Certain poems, like certain flowers, must be set apart from the rest before their full beauty is discovered. Somehow Mr. Middleton Murry loses individuality by standing on the same page as Francis Ledwidge, and (again to choose almost at random) Mrs. M. L. Woods' *Gaudeamus Igitur* detracts from one's enjoyment of E. Cracroft Lefroy's *Flute of Daphnis*, which is placed just above it. It is perhaps purely a question of personal taste, but we wish the anthologists would not seek to emphasise the tendencies of an age, or to group poems according to subject-matter, and would hold fast to the principle of " a poem to a page," even at the cost of more pages or fewer poems. Yet Mr. Caldwell has courage and a wider range than any of his contemporaries. He has evidently read for himself a fair number of books of modern verse.

* * * *

A. M.'s *Shakespeare to Hardy* (Methuen, 6s.) is more catholic in taste than his *Anthology of Modern Verse*. He covers the ground fairly thoroughly, but again somewhat at the expense of undue emphasis on the preferences of his predecessors. The book is a conglomeration of the *Golden Treasury*, the *Oxford Book*, *Georgian Poetry*, and *Poems of To-day*, with a few variations, none of them particularly original, and several startling omissions. We would have welcomed a little less repetition and a little more individuality in the treading of this well-beaten track. In his preface Mr. Lynd lays stress on the importance of the personal factor. Perhaps it is this factor which has led him to omit several moderns of some note—Flecker, Drinkwater, Gibson, and Abercrombie—to include nothing from Sir William Watson except *In Lalehan Churchyard*, and to ignore Edmund Gosse and Alfred Noyes.

Larkspur : a Lyric Garland (Vine Press, 6s.) is a delightful collection, quaintly and curiously decorated with fantastic woodcuts which are characteristic of its contents. In its small way *Larkspur* fulfils perfectly the requirements of the ideal anthology—and here we cannot refrain from stopping to quote a passage which sums up what we take these requirements to be :—

"When we take up the Ideal Anthology we want to lay all secondary considerations by and to commune deliciously with the spirit of poetry in its finest essences. History, the cycles of the seasons, the longer and shorter revolutions of the wheel of time, are all irrelevant, the subject, the author, do not immediately concern us. Our pleasure is to flit from flower to flower, savouring each more delicately because of the transmitted and accumulated joys of all, and so at one and the same time skimming and penetrating, sensitive to the most delicate vibrations of atmosphere, lifted by that very sensitiveness to perfect enjoyment of a world in which substance and atmosphere are one."—*Times Literary Supplement*, February 1st, 1923.

Usually the modern anthologist is influenced by very different considerations. In some cases he believes that he has two almost irreconcilable functions to perform—that he must not only remain true to himself, and give "a record of personal tastes and convictions," but must make a selection which is fully representative of the aims and tendencies of the period he has chosen. In striving to achieve two ends so dissimilar he unnecessarily complicates an already difficult task. An anthology is not expected to be a small treatise on the history and development of poetry, or a reflection of the spirit of some particular age: though indirectly it may be both. What we ask is that it shall be a book which is a friend: a book not left idle in the shelves, and only resorted to for reference, but one to keep in the pocket or at the bedside: one into which we delight to dip in stray moments, reading in it at random, with no aim save that of pure enjoyment. Like *Larkspur*, the late Mr. Robertson's *Golden Book of English Sonnets* (Harrap), which has just been reprinted with a few additions, is a refreshing example of this kind of anthology.

* * * *

We cannot, however, find sufficient justification for the existence of *High Tide* (Duckworth)—a rambling collection of English and American poems which devotes a disproportionate amount of space to the latter. We always distrust instinctively a volume whose foreword begins: "This little book . . ." and in this case the distrust was strengthened on further reading. Most of the book is resolutely cheerful in an obvious and rather sentimental way.

What a subject anthology should be like is shown by Mr. Norman Ault, who has made a distinctive and original collection of religious verse, ranging over seven centuries, in *The Poets' Life of Christ* (Milford, 7s. 6d.). Even did it contain nothing else of merit, one

would deal leniently with it because of the inclusion of the wonderful poem headed *To-day I Must Abide at Thy House*, with its rare craftsmanship, its welcome and too rare reticence and strength. Its language is sincere and simple—in places even colloquial—but it has the movement, the vividness, the quiet compelling dignity of all great religious writing :—

" are the carpets spread,
The dais o'er the head,
The cushions in the chairs,
And all the candles lighted on the stairs ? "

One or two of the other passages hardly have sufficient distinction to merit inclusion : the verse from the Coventry Miracle Play printed on page 25 is reproduced in various forms in dozens of carols, and is neither profound nor arresting. Others, again, seem too slight to bear the weight which the quotations with which they are headed impose upon them, and weaken, rather than emphasise, the significance of those quotations ; while a few of the shorter extracts are dragged in rather unnecessarily—the single sentence, for instance, wrested from its context, from *Lycidas* :—

" The dear might of him that walked the waves."

But these are trivial objections, and its decoration, arrangement and selection do indeed give to the book the quality which Mr. Ault claims for it, " something of the æsthetic unity of a single work of art." It fails in one respect, however—or rather the poets are shown to fail. They present the traditional and ecclesiastical Christ ; they have no fresh or individual interpretation of His life and its significance. For that we must look to the unorthodox, of whom Allen Brockington, with his *Nazarene* and *Jesus the Singer*, is a bold example.

Glancing again over these volumes, each with its own peculiar flavour, its incipient individuality, we cannot help feeling disappointment. We have not yet discovered, and still await hopefully, a good all-round modern anthology, which will include the best, and only the best. We are confident that enough selections can be made from the English poetry of the present century to make a modern anthology which is more catholic, more representative, and maintains more consistently a high standard, than any which has so far appeared ; an anthology that will be a well of delight and beauty, a garland of unfading flowers, gathered by fingers that are delicate and tender, and not gnarled and cramped.

M. H. W.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

E. F. LUCAS, reviewing a recent anthology, quotes Guyon to the effect that it is better to find a diamond in the sand than a flaw in the diamond. " Facing the Sahara sandstorm of modern verse, he continues, one struggles to obey that sage's injunction, irresistibly as the longing grows to shut one's eyes and stop one's ears and turn one's back on it all. But to get back to our diamonds ; more there may be, but these dim eyes here discerned but two—not poetic moments (there were, of course, many more of those)—but poems."

Mr. Lucas would have been happier with the poems submitted here. A high level of workmanship has been maintained, and of poems there are certainly more than two. But our " commended " list, long as it is, does not nearly exhaust the names of those who, somewhere in the course of their writing, gave expression to thoughts which were rich and strange ; often, too, the expression was noble, but the nobility was limited to a few lines. In some of the verses submitted the craftsmanship was that of a skilled worker who was reproducing an old master and had really nothing to say for himself ; in others, beautiful thought, struggling for expression, failed to find it apparently because vocabulary was limited or prosody ignored.

> " Such harmony is in immortal souls
> But while this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it,"

said Lorenzo, perhaps too pessimistically. But certainly it is a matter of vesture.

One wonders if some of the least promising of the entries were read aloud before the final draft was passed. It is indubitable that the appreciation of the music of poetry must be through the ear or through the aural memory. As one reads in the March *Concertgoer*, " The experienced musician can pick up a score and hear the music written in it without actually playing it ; and it is the same with poetry. The experienced poet is able to hear and appreciate poetry merely by seeing the words, but it is as useless for anyone without experience in poetry to try and appreciate it by reading it silently as it is for one inexperienced in music to do so with a score."

The technique of a poem is not that of a short story, in which every sentence must in some way or another be part of a gradual leading up to one point which is the grand moment ; but a good poem does not end weakly. There is another striking similarity between the two

forms : neither can admit a useless word. The first of two poems by Honor F. Leeke—and it is on account of this poem that we assign her the premium award, undivided—exemplifies both lessons.

SPRING MORNING

Lo, I have seen
A trumpeter clad in green
This very morn !
Right gallant and gay he stood
Alone in a windy wood
Winding his horn.

But who is he
That maketh strange melody
When all is still ?
Who hath awakened the Spring
By his joyous trumpeting ?
—A Daffodil.

Her second poem, too, is delightful and is highly commended, though it does not transmit her inspiration with the lens-like clarity of the first, which—one feels—is the real thing to which we all aspire : a spiritual event, registered in ink. Highly commended also are *A Blind Man Fears Death*, by E. Joyce Harrison, whose last six lines one would have liked to feel it fair to quote ; *The Guest*, by Cyril G. Taylor ; *In Syria*, and *To a Friend* (*Paddy*), by Edna A. Kahla ; *Night* and *Shadows* by Irene Petch ; *Any Child to Any Mother*, by Audrey Wrangham, and her *Nocturne*.

We commend F. A. Carter for *Sunday Morning*, a satire in the style of the Hardy of the shorter poems ; Una Phyllis Dod for *The Siren* ; M. J. Kaufmann for *The Test* ; Pauline Marrian for *The Message* ; P. M. Fayrer for *Ecstasy* ; H. Ross for *To A.B.L.M.* ; S. Marguerite Goode for the last half of her eight-lined *For a Dull Day* ; Rosalind Vallance for *Two Quatrains* ; Anne MacDonald for *Treasure* ; Eric C. French for *The Land Our Fathers Knew* ; Irene Bell for *East and West* ; Phyllis Hastings for *Love-Magic* ; " Philomel " for two very dainty lyrics, and Michael Mullin for *Story of a River*, a really poetic study of the water-cycle. Molly Adams only just fails of great success in *The Enchanted Hour* ; and the same must be written of A. Doris L. Wilson's *I Am in Love With Darkness*. There are many beautiful lines in *Most* by Blanche Jones, *Lines Written in the New Forest* by Joan Warburg, *Scotland Yet* by Evelyn F. Fitch, and

Three Little Jewish Children at Mass by Minna R. Dowson. Finally, one or two competitors—*only* one or two—must be advised to eschew trochaic metres for a very long time, and facetiousness for ever.

O. C. DE C. E.

THE BARTLETT PRIZE

FIFTY DOLLARS FOR A SONNET ON THE SEA

TO mark the inception of the American Section of THE POETRY REVIEW, our American Editor offers fifty dollars in competition for a sonnet on that most English of subjects, the Sea—a subject, however, that since Swinburne's day has received curiously little attention from English verse. We have been preoccupied with our own minor egoisms, with street lamps and dunghills, to the neglect of the hilltops and the sea—a strange phenomenon, for though we may never look up to the stars, the sea may come easily within the range of our abased vision. Some minor poets have almost set a fashion by coming so near to the majesty and mystery of the sea as to describe bathing scenes from the beach and subsequent philandering in rocky coves. But to the big theme, the music and miracle of the sea, they have remained as dumb as Milton's organ voice.

While the subject is essentially an English one, it may appeal most strongly to writers remote from any ocean and stimulate the imagination of the Middle West more effectively than the minds of coast dwellers. Anyhow, the competition is not restricted to either the United States or Great Britain, and to enable distant readers to enter on equal terms the closing date will be not earlier than July 25th. We hope this will encourage entries from India, Japan, Australia, Fiji, China, the Society Islands, Honolulu, and wherever else we have readers within the seven seas.

MSS. must be addressed to the New York office of THE POETRY REVIEW (Mrs. Hunt Bartlett, 27, West 67th Street), the envelope identified by the words "Sea Sonnet" being written on the top left-hand corner. A Board of Adjudicators will assist our American Editor in making the awards in this as well as in any other general competitions that may develop from the enterprise and liberality of our American Editor and her associates, as well as in the restricted and inter-State competitions that may be announced later. As the MSS. submitted in competition cannot be returned, contributors should keep a copy of their poems.

[For other Announcements, see page xi, xii, xiii, xiv.]

AMERICAN VERSE IN BRITISH DRESS

A VARIETY of new verse by American writers has been lately published in Great Britain. We have recently had the collected poems of Edward Arlington Robinson, who, in the opinion of many, is the pre-eminent American poet, perhaps because he is not distinctively American. The best examples of the younger school to claim British attention come to this country by way of Mr. H. Milford, from the Yale University Press. In *Burning Bush*, by Karle Wilson Baker, each subject is coloured by imagination, and hardly a poem in the book will fail to give pleasure to the reader, because of its pithiness and concise expression of original thought. It is at once apparent in looking into *Hidden Waters*, by Bernard Raymund, that the writer has individuality. A love of nature is his greatest characteristic, and is expressed with freshness and spontaneity. *Indian Summer*, by Henry Lane Eno (Duffield, New York) is another book of note. Like several of his new-world brothers, the author has been deeply impressed by the primitive forces of the universe ; he looks back to the " primal darkness " and beginnings of things seen in our environment of to-day. Cale Young Rice also does this. In his *Mihrima and Other Poems* (Hodder and Stoughton) his realism, violence and beautiful lyrical passages, and a passionate love of the sea show a kinship with Masefield, although his style is less rugged. The play which gives the book its title reveals surprising contrasting qualities of mystical imagination. There is force and marked descriptive power in *The Barcarole of James Smith and Other Poems*, by Herbert S. Gorman (Putnam), but some of the subjects are obscure. " The Son of Dawn " is a shrewd and discerning study of Kit Marlowe, and seems to be more worthy as a title poem than that chosen by the writer. However much people may agree or disagree with the opinions of Ralph Chaplin in his *Bars and Shadows* (Unwin), it is evident that there is genuine sincerity in his revolt against the " old order," but what would he have said if his anti-war doctrines had prevailed and the world had been gripped in the mailed fist of Germany ? The promise of most of the above-mentioned books is hardly maintained in *Nightshade*, by Charles Stevens Remington, a pretentious volume containing only glimpses of gold among a heap of dross. Generally speaking, in none of these books is there a trace of the extreme modernity that is at present making somnolent conservatives sit up and blink in bewildered astonishment. There is also very little free verse, and what there is of it is well done.

Practically all these books are the result of conscientious labour: the senseless nonsense so much in vogue over here is apparently tabooed by these writers, showing that America, at least, is not decadent, but has a virility that may lead to great things in the future.

We are often disappointed when receiving verse from writers living in remote parts of the globe. Too self-centred to notice the wealth of interesting and unhackneyed material that lies around them, they choose commonplace, introspective subjects when the whole reading world is athirst for something new. *London Lost and Other Poems*, by Arnold Wall, a New Zealand writer (Whitcombe and Tombs), does not belong to this category. It is full of humour, and sometimes sarcasm, and includes description and information about the country that make the book entertaining throughout. The poems are unequal in merit, the two most striking being "Canterbury Climate" and the title poem. A book of verse and prose printed in Malay, *Oddments*, by Gilbert E. Brooke, is also interesting, especially in the descriptive passages. The writer has not shown much discernment in arranging his subjects, the serious being too much mixed up with the absurd. Gertrude Clowes, like Gilbert E. Brooke, has taken the Hiawathan model for one of her poems. *Blue Stone Daughter and Other Poems* (Hill) contains several animal subjects, for the booklet is being sold with the laudable object of benefiting the R.S.P.C.A. In all her poems it is obvious that she has taken trouble; the verses run smoothly because the words have been well chosen and the effect is neither facile nor laboured. Another writer, R. B. Manley, has published a book of school verse, *Rhymes of Bury and Other Poems*, which are a great deal more satisfactory than those on Tonbridge School, which we noticed last month. Mr. Manley has entered far more into the spirit of that exceptional type of humanity, the schoolboy. Like Arnold Wall, his humour makes his work entertaining reading, whilst without ponderous moralising he upholds the ideals and traditions of Bury School, letting his imagination dwell upon the rich historical associations of the ancient town.

Sixteen and Under, a book of prose and verse by young writers, collected by Edith Place (Chelsea Publishing Co.), interests us because of our own experience in dealing with a large amount of delicate and fanciful work by children which has drifted through our editorial office. Like the appendix to that excellent anthology, the *Junior Poetry Book* (Dent), which has more than once been alluded to in our pages, this book shows how worth while it is to encourage the effort of children to express their thoughts and ideas.

A great deal of mediocre verse must be the inevitable result of this incentive to write, but there never fails to be something that is distinctive, and a great help and influence may be given by this encouragement to the minority of children who show promise. For in modern education, with homework, games and "scouting" or "guiding," the leisure of both boys and girls decreases with every term of school life. This incessant occupation has its disadvantages as well as its benefits, as the impulse to write is more often stifled by this than by actual discouragement. The child will put off an attempt until the next day, when there may be even less spare time; then disinclination or other interests may prevent him from ever writing down his idea. The compiler of *Sixteen and Under* has appended a series of criticisms of the short stories and poems she has chosen, and these, like the criticisms given from time to time in The Poetry Review, will doubtless prove stimulating and helpful to others besides the actual contributors to her book, who have helped with the making of an entertaining hour's reading.

P. M. P.

VIGOROUS AMERICAN VERSE MAGAZINES.

AMERICA is a prolific producer of magazines of verse, of which the majority are on a higher plane and of more catholic interest than English periodicals of a similar nature. *Contemporary Verse* is an admirable example of the "all-poetry magazine." Its contents are always distinctive, fresh, vigorous. The editor, Dr. Charles Wharton Stork, who is a particular authority on Scandinavian literature, is a judiciously severe critic who maintains a dignified yet kindly attitude in his regard for contemporary effort. In his rare and brief editorial comments, which are confined to the covers of the magazine and are not allowed to encroach on the monthly collection of poems by new and recognised writers from all parts of the Continent, very sensible views are expressed tersely and pointedly. The pertinent question, "Is there sublimity in verse to-day?" is answered in the following note:—

"Many daring claims are made for modern poets by their admirers. The public is told of Mr. De Cameron's decorative sense, of Mr. Dubb's psychological depth, Miss Fulsome's felicitous imagery, Mrs. Portmanteau's gift of verbal tonality. Yet the virtue of sublimity, rated highest by critics from Longinus down, is never attributed to a living writer. In its fullest expression it is none too common throughout the whole of England's Parnassus. Marlowe had it, Shakespeare—especially in *Lear*, Milton, Blake, and, most

of all, Shelley. Is sublimity an outworn ideal or do poets to-day simply not dare its vertiginous empyrean? How should we know it if we found it?

"It does exist to-day, we think, and is to be recognised by a strange shiver of the spirit—along the spine, if you will. The shiver announces a moment when, to quote Shelley's *Defense of Poetry*, we are made to 'participate in the eternal,' when 'the veil of the hidden beauty of the world' is lifted. Emerson, sound democrat and sound critic, believed that this revelation might come in the life of to-day no less than in stories of the gods and heroes. He was right. There is no more sublimity in Faustus' apostrophe to Helen, 'Is this the face that launched a thousand ships,' than in Wordsworth's lines to Lucy:

"'Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.'

Nor are Hector and Achilles a whit more inspiring than John Hay's *Jim Bludso*, whose ghost went up in the wreck of the 'Prairie Belle.'

"We avow that more than anything else we are on the lookout for a gleam of sublimity. Furthermore, we believe we have discovered it fairly often, being confirmed by the response of our readers and critics. We had a subtly unmistakable feel of it in John French Wilson's *Week-end Sonnets* and in the following passage from Herbert Longfellow's *Mirrors*:—

"'The old woman does not have a purple hat
But there is a veil over her face.
The pattern of the veil is fine and very soft,
It was woven by pain.
The eyes of the old woman have been set in light,
It is not a common light,
It was kindled by joy.
I am not looking at the old woman,
I am looking at a mirror and a reflection.'

We have never read these lines without the shiver. We want above all things to know which of our poems produce a similar effect."

In the March number *The Cult of Cowardice* is discussed very honestly:—

"Why is it that the intelligent reader so often turns away from a modern book with a sense of shame in human nature? The race has come a pretty long pilgrimage, wandering, stumbling, but still—reckoned by centuries—making what looks to a good many of us like progress. Why this sudden disgust among men of letters at their fellow travellers?

" There is one sane reason for discouragement. The war has shown us that we are not nearly so far along as we thought, that, in a word, we have been expecting too much of ourselves. A more critical appraisal is, therefore, very much in order. But an admission of past failures and present weakness need not imply a hopeless outlook for the future. Why do many of the younger and youngest poets and fictionists regard life as a meaningless phantasmagoria or a bad joke at their particular expense ?

" We offer a plain answer : simply because they are afraid to live. Nothing seems more purposeless than a dance looked at through a closed window that shuts off the music. Many poets are self-deafened by a conceit that takes them out of ' the herd.' Some few revel fatuously in their ultra-sensitiveness to the suffering of others, mostly more apparent than real. But the greater number of this class, who have been brought up indulgently with no sense of responsibility, object to a world where nobody has yet made a real name without steady, hard work. A vicious social system has brought the juvenile American prematurely into the limelight, either an an athletic star or a popular debutante. The forcing system of journalism develops an urge for notoriety and an ability to use glaring metaphors before the ideas behind them are understood.

" The resulting evils are of two kinds : First, we discover the poetaster who revels in self-exposure, the baby Whitmanite, so to speak. He kicks and prods every physical emotion till it is raw and then projects a battered image of himself on the void which he calls the universe. The other type is the cold stylistic student of surfaces, whether of nature or character, the man who ' sees not through but with the eye.' Both are described in Mr. Guiterman's ironic line, ' I feel so sorry for myself.' The former type suffers from feeling too much, the latter from not feeling at all. Both are fostered by the cult of cowardice, of shrinking from the facts of life.

" Our remedy may seem cruelly drastic ; it is for the aspirant not to think at all about his feeling or lack of feeling, but to hold down a hard job for a few years. Then, if he is really to be a poet, thoughts and emotions many times larger than himself will come to him from his contacts. The courage of losing his smaller self will make him begin to understand and trust his fellows. His sense of beauty will then be re-created in a firmer mould, and it is ten to one his pessimism will have died with his egotism. With fewer people in Greenwich Village and more in the fighting trenches of idealism, we should have fewer howls and whines—but more songs."

The Fugitive allows more license than *Contemporary Verse*, but otherwise is similar in expression and make-up, allowing itself very brief prose comment on contemporary tendencies, of which the following sentence is an example, making a protest that will be welcomed by many readers on both sides the Atlantic :—

"Now that modern poets have pointed out from time to time that there is no God, that pessimism is the end of knowledge, that the world is so hopelessly pluralistic that one is frequently aware of itchings of the body and of alimentary sensations the while he endeavours to synthesize beauty, that sentiment is the naive reaction of morons to external stimulus, that truth in the relation of the sexes is lechery, that garbage heaps and dunghills are subject matter of poetry—and many other startling and, to them, seemingly highly original discoveries—is it not time for one who is neither poet nor modern to suggest again that these young poets have prepared for themselves a freedom which looks tragically like slavery, a courage which smacks of cowardice, and in their creedless night have committed themselves to a creed of spiritual anarchy ?"

G. K. CHESTERTON

LOOKING through *The Ballad of St. Barbara and Other Verses* (Palmer), by G. K. Chesterton, although there are one or two good things to be found we search in vain for the old Chesterton, who satisfies us, both with regard to form and content. His topical verses, especially those which are intended satires on education, do not seem to be the outcome of inspired imagination ; they do not grip or sting, and there is something cheap about them. We come across the old Chesterton, perhaps, in the Guild poems, but even there the vision does not break through :—

"The weavers makes the clothes of men
And coats for everyone ;
They walk the streets like sunset clouds ;
But we have woven and spun
In scarlet or in golden green
The gay coats of the sun."

They do not send the reader singing joyfully and heedlessly down the road of life, careless of stones and briars, as the early Chesterton did ; that is what we have been led to expect of him, and that is what is particularly disappointing not to find now. The title poem, *St. Barbara*, has power and strong individuality, but the interest of this story, with its lurid accompaniment, unfortunately is not sustained throughout the book, in which, however, there is sufficient good

matter and manner to make the reputation of a score of " Georgians " and to make us glad of our new if diluted Chesterton.

The exceedingly pleasant format of Patrick Braybrook's volume on G. K. Chesterton (Chelsea Publishing Co.) is deceptive. Instead of a judicious presentation of the leading literary publicist of this generation, we find only a somewhat dull and trivial analysis of the brilliant essayist and his work, the kind that one finds in an amateur magazine, seasoned with an attempt at humour and a few meaningless epigrams and paradoxes in imitation of his subject, " the most arresting writer of the day, who is known in every country as the Master of Paradox, which is to say that he is the Master of the Temple of Understanding." Surely a *non sequitur!* Too many biographies and appreciations are dull and tedious, for they are written by little people who have no breadth of outlook, no acuteness of judgment. Imaginative insight into character and an almost uncanny power of recognition of the innermost thoughts and perceptions of another mind are qualities as rarely seen as a blue moon. The thinking public is not satisfied with mere obvious praise; it wants appreciation—or criticism—by an equal in intellect, who alone can penetrate the obscurities of a man's character. Those books by G.K.C. on Bernard Shaw, or Bernard Shaw on Ibsen, are far more satisfying than this work can ever be, for they throw new light on their subjects, instead of the dust of unilluminating platitudes.

WALT WHITMAN*

OUR friends of the National Adult School Union, after much heart-searching, decided to recommend a series of lessons on Walt Whitman as part of their programme for 1921. The action has, I think, met a long-felt need. Some thousands of religiously disposed British men and women were thus enabled to publicly discuss the message of a poet who, to some minds, grips the Heart of the Unseen as no other. Furthermore, there is a unity between Anglo-Saxon singers often unsuspected by the singer. Whitman regarded himself as the founder of a purely American literature. Mr. Mathews seems to take much the same view, for we are told (p. 7): " Had he [Whitman] been born and bred in England, what he might have written I do not know, but he would not have written *Leaves of Grass.*" Why? Whitman's philosophy, his " Catalogues," his form of verse, even the phrase " spire of grass," were anticipated by Thomas Traherne, a seventeenth-century Englishman. On the

* *Walt Whitman.* Being the substance of three lectures delivered to the Liscard Adult School, by Godfrey W. Mathews. (Liverpool: *Daily Post.*)

reverse side of the picture we may cite the case of a great English poet, to whom Mr. Mathews most happily dedicates these lectures, Edward Carpenter. Walt Whitman is the heritage of all who value our Anglo-Saxon birthright in the realm of song. The thought-compelling studies of Mr. Mathews should for this reason secure a wide acceptance.

SIRGASHT

An Indian Bridal Procession

THERE goes the merry caravan . . .
Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong,
The merry bridal caravan,
With drum and pipe and song.
There rides the black-eyed bridegroom,
To fetch his bonny bride ;
His turban wreathed with jasmin-bloom . . .
How proudly camels stride,
Through sunny fields along ;
Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong.

So sweetly bells of camels ring . . .
Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong ;
Afar the crimson saddles swing,
Through village-lane and throng.
The music faint and fainter grows ;
At last but here and there,
A patch of blue or crimson shows ;
And softly through the air,
By breeze is borne along,
Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong.

A secret echo doth remain . . .
Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong.
Within my breast a bridal-train,
With cymbal, flute and song . . .
A bridegroom of princely line,
On prancing steed of " love " ;
Towards the bride, " a dream divine."
With gorgeous train doth move ;
Through starry fields along ;
Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong . . . Ding-Dong.

ELSA KAZI.

Khairpur Mirs, January 27.

TENNYSON RE-VALUED

THAT two lives of Tennyson should have come out just now at the same moment is indicative of an increasing interest in the great Victorian Poet. The title of Mr. Fausset's book is *Tennyson, a Modern Poet* (Selwyn and Blount); that of Mr. Nicholson's is *Tennyson, Aspects of His Life, Character and Poetry* (Collins). With so much written about him by those who knew him, it is easy to make a fairly adequate life. But was there ever a poet of whose life and character a personal knowledge was more absolutely necessary if the life was to have any real value? Mr. Fausset can only draw a picture of him "as he conceives him." He writes well. The description on page three of the sand and the sea bank at Mablethorpe is so perfect that we feel sure that Mr. Fausset himself has something of the poet in him. He divides his book into four sections called Tendencies, Application, Success and Eminence, and in the two last he gets nearer to the poet than he does in the first half of his volume.

The writers of both these books suffer not only from not ever knowing Tennyson, but though they attribute to his Somersby surroundings much that influenced his poetry, they are both woefully ignorant of Lincolnshire. Mr. Fausset does know the difference between *Marsh* and *Fen*, but he makes the Marsh come right up to Somersby and Mr. Nicholson does the same for the *Fen*, though neither comes within some miles. Mr. Nicholson constantly refers to the "*gloom*" of the Wold and Fen and talks of the pasture of the Fen, which is all arable, for when in *Mariana* Tennyson says: "From the dark fen the oxen's low came to her" it was from the crew-yards and not from any pasture that it came; and as for gloom, a wet day, or a day when the wind brought the "sea haze" inland, would of course be dull, but in ordinary weather there is no such thing as gloom in either the fen, the marsh or the wold.

The objection I find to both these books is that they insert their own theories and force the poet into them and complain that he is feeble and indolent, and his genius neither creative nor imaginative. Of the early lyrical poems they admit the beauty and pay tribute to the qualities of rhythm and melody, and yet Mr. Fausset writes that the poems of 1842 are in the light of their successors, "a tragic document because they show the whole range of Tennyson's powers and the first stage of that conflict between genius and the commonplace which was to end in so overwhelming a victory for the latter." This idea is repeated with damnable iteration which, when we come to his remarks on *The Princess*, results in many pages so dull that it is hard to wade through them. The two later sections of the book are better; but a life of the man which does not deal largely with his poetry is, in Tennyson's case, not very satisfactory, and we miss much in the book which the name of Tennyson at once implies to the many thousands of his admirers all over the world.

Mr. Nicholson has given us a volume called *Tennyson, Aspects of His Life, Character and Poetry*, which blackens his character during the greater part of his life and consigns the greater part of his poetry to the scrap heap. It seems a pity for any cultivated man to undertake so unpleasing a task, especially as the writer is manifestly, in spite of himself, a genuine Tennysonian, with a most discerning critical power; but, his mind having been made up about the man and his many shortcomings, he does not often allow merit.

He sees a good deal to praise in the remarkable 1830 volume; saying of the Somersby Song, "A spirit haunts the year's last hours," that he does not see how, for the effect desired, observation and technique could go much farther. Some of the critics of the time were fairly bloodthirsty, as, indeed, they continued to be for the next five and twenty years, which embraced the appearance of *Maud* and *In Memoriam*. The 1832 volume contained *The Lotus Eaters* and *The Dream of Fair Women*, but the reviewers tore it to pieces, and for five years Moxon sold comparatively few copies.

In the two volumes of 1842 much of the two earlier volumes reappeared with many alterations and omissions, especially in *The Palace of Art* and *Œnone*, and a whole volume of new work, notably the *Morte d'Arthur* and *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Ulysses*, *Break*, *Break*, *Break*, and *The Poet's Song*. Nothing could surpass these but the lovely songs in *The Princess* published a few years later, and to all of these Mr. Nicholson does full justice, but he cannot forgive the poet for not doing more between 1833 and 1850, when *In Memoriam* came out.

He concludes that Tennyson, during seventeen important years of his life, was "neither adventurous nor capable" but became "neurotic and selfish," and "mooned about the cheaper taverns of the Metropolis." Carlyle at this same time was writing of him as "a restful, brotherly, solid-hearted man"; and again, "I do not meet in these last decades such company over a pipe."

We may fairly resent the constant description of Tennyson as "mooning" and "shambling"; at Farringford he is called "a shambling bear" and even Watts's colossal statue in the cathedral precincts at Lincoln is called "a shambling statue." It seems a very inappropriate adjective for one who at the age of sixty waltzed like a young man and whose daily walk on the Farringford Down was a trial in wind and limb to many of his companions. Bradley, when Dean of Westminster, said to me after one such walk: "He is really wonderful, I am the younger man, but he walks me off my legs." But the picture Mr. Nicholson draws of the man he had never met is both ridiculously untrue and very unworthy of the writer, who, had he known him personally, must have been charmed by his bright conversation, his unfailing humour and the simplicity of his character, which only became more marked as new honour came to him. We should thus, I venture to think, not have had throughout the pages of the book the adjectives "mean," "ignorant," "cowardly," "dishonest," etc., applied light-heartedly to Tennyson, nor would he have been described as "bawling" across the table at his Balliol host insulting remarks about the wine, or treating his own

guests to "loud guffaws." After all, Tennyson was a gentleman.

It is Mr. Nicholson's strong prejudice against all that is called Victorian that pursues us all through the book, and Tennyson is represented as coming more and more under Victorian influence; which we are told implied a giving up of all nobler aims and adopting all that was commonplace and fatal to the truly poetic.

But we cannot all see the wonderful Victorian age through such spectacles in spite of the slights and insults which the present age delights to heap on that period. We point to its product of men, eminent in every walk of life, and to the many splendid women also, who adorned and led the social life of those times, and we can find no parallel to it in any other period. But Mr. Nicholson is of a quite different opinion, and says that what is worst in Tennyson's poetry can be ascribed directly to the taste and influence of his age. But surely it would not have been easy for one who was the greatest figure in that remarkable age to be anything but a Victorian. What else could he be? Finally, he dismisses the subject by saying that "the extent to which the Victorians misinterpreted and mishandled the phenomena of their age is an historical disaster."

His intimate acquaintance with the poet's works makes Mr. Nicholson a good literary guide, but when he gives us his idea for a selection he rather startles us with the omissions he would make. All the Idylls to begin with, though he admits their beauty and speaks of the *Passing of Arthur* in the same sort of way that he does of the great *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* as "a magnificent poem magnificently treated," and he knows, of course, that they form the greatest Epic since Milton's time. Further, he speaks always most slightingly of *Lucretius*, which contains, in the description of the sunrise, one of the finest passages in all literature:

> "King of the East altho' he seem, and girt
> With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts
> His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
> That climb into the windy halls of heaven."

He is not enthusiastic about *The Revenge* or *The Gardener's Daughter*, but finds a good deal to preserve in the earliest poems, and naturally selects all the lovely lyrics of *The Princess* and the clever Dedicatory poems and Epitaphs, and of course *Maud* and *In Memoriam*. And here I must particularly congratulate him on his masterly analysis of the famous poem on

"Sweet Catullus' all but island, Olive-silvery Sirmio."

The last chapter which treats of the poet's lyrical inspiration is very pleasant reading. The "Farringford Period" of twenty-five years from 1857 onwards is passed over as "unfortunate," but the last "splendid Aldworth period" with *Rizpah* and *Lucknow* and *De profundis*, and with *Demeter* and *Persephone* written when he was eighty, has his full approval.

The poet's talent for accommodating the movement of his verse to its subject, the subtle use of onomatopœia, of which Mr. Nicholson tells a delightful story of Bram Stoker and Tennyson, his masterly use of alliteration and avoidance of monotony in his longer poems by slight variations of stress, are things in which Tennyson has no equal in his own or any other age.

So much for the poetry; with regard to the life, the amount of information which the authors have got together about the Cambridge apostles must be a surprise to many, but the little details of the poet's life seem to be rather of a gossipy nature and do not command our respect. Gossip, however, in the chapter about Farringford, passes into scandal when the writer introduces, on page 170, an account written in a vein of ridicule of the domestic life of the poet and his wife; it is a reproduction of someone's account of his visit there. We are glad that it is anonymous. But that a guest should pay a visit and be treated as a friend and then write an account of all he saw and heard in a spirit of treacherous ridicule is in the worst possible taste, and that Mr. Nicholson should have thought it fitting to copy it into his book is, to me, most surprising. But the chapter does not end here, for its last three pages are taken up with

the most unnecessary translation of an article from a Berlin periodical purporting to describe a visit of Queen Victoria to Farringford. The writer did not know Farringford, and the account is full of absolute impossibilities, and the conversation he puts into the mouth of both Queen and Poet simply ludicrous. I have no hesitation in saying that the whole thing is a complete and vulgar fiction from beginning to end. The Queen *never* went to Farringford. If only Mr. Nicholson had known the poet and his surroundings we should have been spared all this, and had less to annoy us in reading this mass of apology where no apology was needed. But we can solace ourselves by turning to our long-loved poems again and without any apprehension that this or any other age will ever produce the matchless music and felicitous wording of Tennyson's work as shown in every period of his sixty years of Song.

W. F. RAWNSLEY.

I WHO HAVE WALKED WITH BEAUTY

I WHO have walked with Beauty will not falter
Though drear may stretch the road ahead, and long,
For I have seen on Time's eternal altar
Love's candle burning like some flaming song.

I who have walked with Wonder will not waver
Though many be the miseries I see,
I shall go forward fortified and braver
Who hold the jeweled sword of Memory.

I who have walked with Gladness will not tarry
Again with Sorrow, though she press me sore,
A Cross of Joy shall be the cross I carry
Up through the years and on for evermore.

ELISABETH SCOLLARD.

A MODERN CAVALIER-POETESS*

THE author of *Alastair Gordon, R.N.*, and historian of *The Order of St. John of Jerusalem*, has found a most congenial subject in the Life and Works of Louise Imogen Guiney, a poetess of charm and distinction, to whose fragrant memory this book forms a worthy and timely tribute. Born in a Boston suburb in 1861, on the eve of the outbreak of the Civil War, Louise Imogen Guiney was the daughter of a Catholic gentleman destined to military distinction and to a wound which ultimately led to his death at the age of forty-two. Like Edgar Allan Poe, Miss Guiney came of a family of mixed (Irish, French and Scots) blood, and of an ancient line. She had a warm corner in her heart for every soldier, and this not only on her beloved father's account. Utterly uncensorious, always the soul of chivalry, she was yet in her womanly way a canny fighter, and, as her biographer justly observes, it is her own voice that in *Knight Errant* speaks in the person of St. George :

> Spirits of old that bore me
> And set me meek of mind
> Between great dreams before me
> And deeds as great behind—
> . . . . .
> O give my youth, my faith, my sword
> Choice of the heart's desire :
> A short life in the saddle, Lord !
> Not long life by the fire.

Her earliest books, *Songs at the Start*, 1884, *The White Sail and Other Poems*, 1887, *A Roadside Harp*, 1893, met with a warm welcome in the United States and in Canada. " She can put more valour in a single line than one can squeeze from our periodical poets in a twelvemonth," wrote the Canadian poet, Bliss Carman. " She is already on the way up the steep hill to literary fame," wrote another critic, " and is destined to have a distinct and conspicuous place in the constellation of American literature." The favourable verdict was confirmed by the approval of such notable elders as Wendell Holmes, Louise Chandler

* *Louise Imogen Guiney :* Her Life and Works, 1861–1920. By E. M. Tenison. London : Macmillan, 1923. 15s. net.

Moulton, Edmund Clarence Stedman and Thomas Bailey Aldrich. There has been seldom a more fortunate *début.* Yet her head was by no means turned: "She trod the earth lightly yet becomingly, and carried her full cup with steady hands." Probably her intuition warned her that these halcyon days might prove transient; indeed, her work shows often a certain fine impatience of worldly standards, an instinctive rejection of material success. In the original version of her sonorous ballad, *Tarpeia*—a version far stronger and more picturesque, by the way, than the final version reproduced in this book—there occurred these significant lines:

> O ye that aspire,
> Tarpeia, *the traitress*, had fill of her woman's desire!

To my mind this implies, or at least suggests, that without some stooping (moral or spiritual) there can be no conquest, and that, like Browning's Ferraran grandee, only in a very different sense, she chose "never to stoop." There were other obstacles: the need of earning a livelihood by uncongenial toil, first as a postmistress in a New England village, then as librarian at Boston. These employments left her little strength or leisure for imaginative work. In 1895 she spent a summer in a walking tour through rural districts of England and Wales, accompanied by Miss Alice Brown; and she seems at once to have realised that here, not in the country of her birth, was her spirit truly at home. Her later years were spent almost exclusively on this side of the Atlantic, largely at Oxford, and her literary powers were ever increasingly devoted to the exploration and resuscitation of the traditions and ideals of the past, particularly of that seventeenth century whose Royalist poets, brave, courtly and mystical, were closest of all to her heart. She found as much joy in rescuing buried jewels from oblivion as in the cultivation of her own gift of poesy; and if, which I am far from anticipating, she should fail of lasting fame, it would not be from lack of creative power, but of the basic egoism which is one of its common incentives.

The sad but inevitable upshot was the dwindling of her American public, while her unflinching loyalty to the highest old-English ideals, her unflagging toil in behalf of such poets as Henry Vaughan, Katherine Philips ("the Matchless Orinda"), Thomas Stanley and William Alabaster, met with little recognition from the general public on this side, or even from editors who might be supposed to know better. "Fix it in your kind heart," she wrote to Mr. Shorter, in one of her rare moments of dejection, "that it [the British public] does not want me. . . . You are the only English editor who will look at prose or verse of mine. I have tried them all; the *Nation* and *Spectator* more than once. . . . Everything comes back with a printed slip. . . . I still seem to be good enough for my own country; but, of course, we are Goths and Vandals."

The exclusion of genius from the mart of mediocrity is no new thing.

"Genius?" you query, slightly raising your eyebrows. Well, so cautious a critic as Edmund Gosse, writing in acknowledgment of *Happy Ending*, said, "I have never doubted your vocation as a poet." Of the lyrics therein he asks, "Can it be that these will ever lose the charm that I discover in them? Will not, rather, future readers blame me for not being louder in their praise?" In this book of E. M. Tenison's, which is a sympathetic study, a memorial, a claim for consideration, rather than a formal biography, the author has been generous in quotation. All the same, I wonder at, without admiring, the confidence of reviewers who on the strength of a cursory perusal of these quotations have presumed to deliver a final verdict on the poet's life-work. One may dismiss as a well-meant disservice the suggestion of an American enthusiast that in Louise Imogen Guiney rather than in Walt Whitman the spirit of his nation is vocal. Like that of Matthew Arnold, whom she so admired, Miss Guiney's muse was wistful, retrospective, no path-maker, but a gleaner of gold from harvests of the past. This by way of discrimination, not of depreciation: it is clear to me that none but a poet born could have written this love-song:

When on the marge of evening the last blue light is broken
And winds of dreamy odour are loosened from afar ;
Or when my lattice opens, before the lark has spoken,
On dim laburnum blossoms, and morning's dying star,

I think of thee—O mine the more if other eyes be sleeping,—
Whose greater noonday splendours the many share and see,
While, sacred and for ever, some perfect law is keeping
The late and early twilight alone and sweet for me.

But the interest of its subject must not debar one from paying its meed of recognition to the book itself. Written with warm sympathy and the tenderness due to a friendship so recently cut short by death, it preserves that degree of decorous detachment which averts any suspicion of gush. Pedants will possibly demur at the absence of a meticulous chronicle of Miss Guiney's various comings and goings and brief sojournings, for which the full material may not have been available. But considered as a spiritual portrait—which is what it really is—the book is in my opinion as nearly as possible perfect. That it is the product of a rich, thoughtful and deeply serious mind would be manifest even if the name of its author had not guaranteed it in advance. From its reading emerges a clear and gracious image—that of a gifted woman whose rare charm, gaiety, distinction were deep-rooted in allegiance to the sternest demands of the spirit. And, closing it, I am tempted to employ in a larger signification, by way of adieu, two stanzas of a tributary poem by Emily Huntingdon Miller, published twenty-six years ago in *The Dial:*

Here was her camp-fire : from its embers grey
A faint blue smoke steals upward and away ;
Here with great Pan in converse gay she stood,
And strolled with Dian through the scented wood.

O happy vagrant, singing as you pass,
Drop still your trail of bloom across the grass ;
Pitch your white tent, and in some cool retreat
Wait with a welcome for our slower feet.

CHARLES WHITBY.

VOICES

On English Poetry. Robert Graves. (Heinemann.)
An Introduction to Poetry. Jay B. Hubbell and John O. Beatty. (Macmillan.)
The Poetic Procession. J. F. Roxburgh. (Blackwell.)
The Poetic Mind. F. C. Prescott. (Macmillan.)
The Realm of Poetry. Stephen J. Brown, S.J. (Harrop.)
An Anatomy of Poetry. A. Williams-Ellis. (Blackwell.)
The Soul of Modern Poetry. R. H. Strachan, D.D. (Holder.)

I

VOLUME after volume issues from the Press on the subject of poets, in which the authors are not so much concerned about poetry itself as with the poet's mind—what it is, what it should be, or should not be, or whether the reader, keeping this dissection in view, ought to look for teaching, or beauty, or profundity of thought, until at last the reverberations of opinion well-nigh deafen the sensitive ear, and undoubtedly disturb the mind with so great a clamour of confliction as to obliterate all joy in poetry itself.

But when all has been said (and when shall that happy consummation be attained ?), poetry still remains, as her sister religion remains, a state to be lived, not a position to be argued over ; and just as some persons find their happiness in religion to abide in ornate ritual and others in the absence of all ritual, so also will poetic souls revel in such poems as appear to fulfil their demands, however various such choice may be. Cold reasoning will never cause a man to prefer, say, Masefield to Francis Thompson, Meredith to Browning, or vice versa, and each succeeding critic, or would-be critic, repeats the axiom that "The poet expresses what we cannot express for ourselves," and that is eventually the point to which all that is said or written on the subject must inevitably return. Therefore

no final unreversible law can be enunciated. We may learn every rule of metre, scansion, cadence and what not, we may be drilled into detecting bad or faked verse as unerringly as an astute policeman detects the impostor from the genuine beggar ; even so, we shall be no nearer to the personal rapture of poetry than an accurate knowledge of the Bible is to the Kingdom of Heaven. For how can sublimity be echoed in the heart that owns no caverns of reverence, or beauty be reflected in a soiled mirror ?

It may be, however, a laudable object to erect signposts on the road to poesy as a guide to the immature, but even then, if these young things have the scent of the open sea in their nostrils, in each headlong race to reach it they will probably knock flat many of your kindly meant signposts.

Mr. Robert Graves, in his delightful book, *On English Poetry*, erects no signposts ; he very distinctly avows that he has no intention of so doing. He says : " Some people who buy this book will be disappointed at not being told the correct way of writing triolets and rondeaux. Theirs is the practical turn of mind that longs to join a correspondence class and learn the formulas for drawing a washer-woman or trousers or the stock caricature of Mr. Winston Churchill." His book, full of sly humour together with a profound sense of his subject, is more fitted for the mature mind than for the beginner ; indeed, a poor soul, youthfully striving to " get the rules " of poetry into his head in the vain hope of thereby becoming a poet, would be reduced to wonder what Mr. Graves was " up to," for instead of stately prancings on the horse Solemn, here he is peeping round the half-opened door and recounting a parable, and there is, moreover, more than once a distinct wink of his eyelid. It is a book to return to in the sure anticipation of enjoyment. And, although Mr. Robert Graves disclaims travelling on Pegasus and puts himself and his art into the humble " omnibus," yet his occasional thrusts are sword-sharp and were never given by the blue or white ticket of the General Omnibus Company.

II

On the other hand, the American mind, which appears to resemble the German intelligence in its passion for docketing, is the worst sinner in the matter of supplying dreadful spectacles through which you are instructed to observe the movements of the poetic mind, and without which they assume that you can neither see the poet nor appreciate his art. But the mere measurement of a mountain carries in it no corresponding formula for your trembling and devout delight in its majesty, and its relative height with the surrounding peaks concerns you not at all.

In *The Poetic Mind*, Professor F. C. Prescott affirms that he writes " in order to get at the core of the matter "—namely, " the distinction between ordinary thinking and dreaming," between " practical thought and the poetic," to explain, in fact, " the production of poetry," and in this endeavour he writes 297 pages of close print. On the wrapper the publishers inform us that Professor Prescott, with the rich resources of Freudian research as a basis, has endeavoured to define in positive terms the relation of literary composition to dreams, reveries, and subconscious states. In the book, however, there are very few references to Freud (none of which are indexed), only one to Jung (in a footnote), and four to Jastrow, two of which appear as footnotes. This seems rather a slender basis for the publisher's " puff," especially for a subject which, as the author admits, " calls for a special psychological training." On page 46 the author seems to take up the debatable position of maintaining that thought is hardly possible without words. When thought is commonplace this is perhaps true, for very often words seem to appropriate the place of thought. Most often we use words, not to express our thoughts, but to clothe their poverty and nakedness. In deep or profound thought words appear rather a hindrance than an assistance, and the real thinker thinks intentionally—i.e., without visual or auditory images.

In Chapter VI. the existence of the unconscious is pleaded for, William James is quoted, and Ribot, and *Harper's Magazine*. For a book based on the resources of

Freudian research these authorities are not imposing. In extenuation, it must be pointed out that *Harper's Magazine* is relegated to the footnotes. Again, he says that poetry is, as Shelley declares, " created by that imperial faculty whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man." Now to identify the " imperial faculty " or " the invisible nature of man " with the unconscious seems neither psychological nor critical.

Professor Prescott dilates upon " vision," a thing given, he says, to us all, " when tired, sitting by the fire," and he then quotes those appallingly drab verses by Wordsworth on " Poor Susan." Vision ? " O fires that rushed on Sinai down " burn up visions such as " Poor Susan " !

He goes on to discuss " visions " under mysticism, religious ecstasy, dreams, or the mind under the influence of drugs, hysteria or intoxication, and, with the propriety that the late Queen Victoria might have shown, he says, " Healthy and sensible persons are a little impatient with such manifestations," and that " they certainly often imply weakness, disease, or indulgence. Secondly, they all produce illusion, which is falsehood to fact." And yet he quotes Blake's spiritual verity when the poet was asked if he did not see the rising sun as a yellow disc, something like a guinea, and he passionately replied, " O, no, no ! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying, ' Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.' " Professor Prescott also brings forward Charles Lamb as under the influence of day and night dreams, and, somewhat cruelly, points out the facts that Lamb was in the asylum for a time, and was also addicted to strong drink ; but, dreamer or no, Lamb was not essentially a poet. Shelley, he is kind enough to say, " exhibits more nearly the typical poetic type." More nearly ? Can the whole continent of all America produce so entirely and wholly a poet as Shelley ? Tennyson he judges to have had very few visions or dreams, and therefore, on his showing, proves that Tennyson was a " rather falling short " poet. Yet, in the end, after all that he has to put forward on the poet's being driven by dreams, whether hysterical, or drug, or drink inspired, he appears

to confute his arguments by quoting the words of Leslie Stephens, that "Genius begins where intellect ends, or takes by storm where intellect has to make elaborate approaches according to the rules of scientific strategy. One sees where the other demonstrates." Professor Prescott attempts to prove that the unconscious self, free in dreams, sees and feels what the conscious self is entirely unwitting of, but he quotes in favour of this theory Mrs. Meynell's beautiful lines, *Renouncement*, but in this sonnet the poetess is writing of her daily, hourly longing, and of her conscious desires, which in sleep are immediately fulfilled.

One feels that Professor Prescott is not quite sure of his ground; he is also dreadfully "insistent on the obvious." Here are a few of his weighty dictums, "Certainly we know little of dreams, only what we remember when we awake," and "reverie often runs into dream, and dream encroaches on waking life," "ordinary thought is fatiguing," and "unquestionably dreams may follow indigestion," but, with all respect to Professor Prescott, unquestionably mental indigestion will follow constant platitudes. One experiences also some distress at finding in a book, purporting to be critical, such a sentence as the following, "Some writers draw their characters from themselves, like Byron and Poe; others draw them mainly from outside persons, like Shakespeare and Balzac." It is to be suspected that this author, starting from a theory, is led into quagmires in which he is bound to flounder, or, to adopt an Americanism, to "flop." Finally, the most strenuous efforts of labour should never be evident in the completed work; the magnificent Laocoön does not call up in the spectator the sweat and toil of the sculptor; in the volume, *The Poetic Mind*, the labour is so evident as to produce a corresponding labour in the mind at reading it, and a vague uncertainty as to what battle the trumpet is calling us. Contradictions seem scattered everywhere; on one page he says of Shelley's prophetic lines, "Heard the sea breathe o'er his dying brain its last monotony" (but why misquote?) that "perhaps we had better leave this kind of fortune-telling unexplained"; four pages further on he

lays down the law that " we must be careful not to cheapen the prophetic power; it is never fortune-telling in the vulgar sense." Sense, vulgar or otherwise, becomes confused by dictums such as these.

III

On reading *An Introduction to Poetry*, by Doctor Jay B. Hubbell and Doctor John O. Beatty, one is forced to the conclusion that, in spite of the foreword on the cover to the effect that it is intended for " writers of poetry, readers of poetry, and readers in general," its appeal must be primarily for the young, one might almost say the very young person. For it is impossible to conceive that any writer or reader would require the naïve explanation of Tennyson's use of the word " pilot," or the elucidation of the times and persons of " Sennacherib," or relish the irritating instruction to refer to a classical dictionary before reading *Ulysses*. The authors claim that they have compiled an anthology which represents the best in all branches of English and American poetry; the best then include " God Save the King," " The Star-spangled Banner," and " Fair Harvard." Where, then, shall the worst appear? James Thomson is included in these best, but Francis Thompson is not so much as mentioned at all, he who " passed the gates of Luthany," if ever poet did. Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti, and some American poetesses, are spoken of, but Alice Meynell has not been given a line even in passing. Amongst the mighty dead Donne finds no place, and George Herbert is religiously missing; these seem unaccountable omissions from an anthology which starts from Chaucer, and, if not claiming to include all the old, does profess to include " every living poet of importance."

There is, no doubt, an immense deal of information for the novice in these pages, but the instruction becomes perilously akin to a Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book. The sub-label might run thus, " How to make a poet out of raw materials." It is also bewildering in its acrobatic-like leaps. Thus on one page it jumps from Tennyson's verses

to Queen Victoria, to Van Dyke's lines on Tennyson, and then vaults off to Beaumont and Fletcher, only to re-vault back on to Tennyson once more, with agile graspings at Westminster Abbey *en route*. In this astonishing jerkiness one is left breathless. It is as if a highly intelligent baker were to take a greedy schoolboy into a confectioner's shop and there proceed to instruct the youth as to how many currants were in this cake and how much flour, that another was filled with borax-treated cream and liable to produce pains when partaken of, and so on, and so on, for an hour or more. In the middle of such pratings of pedagogy the much-tried boy could only be expected to cry out, "Oh! hang it all; let me eat one and try for myself." A vast amount of industry has gone evidently to the compiling of this *Introduction to Poetry*, and many beautiful extracts are included, but the judgment of the authors leaves one, at times, somewhat pondering. They state that Masefield is the greatest of all living poets, but is that the harvest of a judgment that places in comparison Shelley's majestic poem, *To Night*, with Longfellow's *Hymn to the Night*? Does the true astronomer confuse himself between the planet Venus and the spark of a glow-worm? The "Light Verse," which has 55 pages of consideration, we pass over. The introduction to a queen does not of necessity include an acquaintance with her jester; light verse may be witty verse, but it is not poetry.

One of the extracts from the American poetesses is spoken of as being "typical of Imagist poetry except that it is more compact and highly polished than most other compositions in free verse" (then follows the irritating and gratuitous information "that an Oread is a mountain nymph):

Oread.
Whirl up sea—
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us—
Cover us with your pools of fir.

Lines such as these are a mere squib ; the juxtaposition of the sea and pines, pointed pines, calls up a conflicting mental picture, and if by " sea " the forest of pines is intended, then the image is equally distorted ; the quality of a pine is pre-eminently erectness. " Splash your great pines " is a perversion of speech ; " pools of fir " is an equal affectation of simile ; pine needles do indeed lie thick and may resemble brown pools, but " fir " conveys no possible picture. And these lines are from a " poetess " who belongs to a school that claims to use " always the exact word." It would be equally true and equally false to write :

Fly up train—
Soar your iron wheels
Soar your great cars
On our fields.
Stand your brown over us
Cover us with your sweet ashes.

and to call that poetry. The book ends with a prophecy from Masefield, " America is making ready for the coming of a great poet." But America has had already a great poet in her midst, Walt Whitman, and if the Imagists are the sign of a coming one greater than he, then, I think, we have no need to strain our eyes looking for the expected star yet.

IV

It is a mental refreshment to turn to *The Poetic Procession*, by Mr. J. F. Roxburgh. Admittedly limited from the fact that it had its birth in the form of lectures, yet at the same time Mr. Roxburgh is a true and sure guide, although his pace is of necessity hurried. Especially discriminating and alive are his words on Keats and Shelley. One might be inclined to argue with him when he asks whether Shelley's *Skylark* and the *Invitation* could have been written without Wordsworth's forerunning. Shelley, almost more than any other poet, appears to have been a law unto himself. Rather more certainly might Mr. Roxburgh have questioned whether Masefield's *Cargoes* has not in every fibre of it an echo of Rudyard Kipling's work.

But, all the same, *The Poetic Procession* is direct, simple, and illuminating. One sees what a genuine critic and lover of true poetry the author is.

V

The Realm of Poetry introduces itself as an attempt to give: (1) A notion of the nature and inner meaning of poetry; (2) to answer the question, "what may poetry be worth to the individual?"; and (3) how to form and foster the taste for poetry in "oneself and in those one influences." It is written, one is sure, in all sincerity, but probably it was not intended for the "old hand." Indeed, the Rev. Stephen Brown says that if lovers of poetry should chance to read—"uninvited"—he hopes they will pardon these pages where he combats the prejudice against poetry in youthful minds. An "uninvited" guest cannot outrage politeness, therefore, by quarrelling with food ostensibly not provided for him, but this question will obtrude itself—will young persons who dislike poetry, on account of the many excellent reasons the Rev. Stephen Brown recounts, will they so much as open a book entitled *The Realm of Poetry?* And if the young heretic will thus refuse holy water, certainly the older heretic will doubly avoid it. And why, after all, should so much pains be taken to induce swine to like pearls? They are useful animals, and their own choice of food suits them admirably. Even if they could be persuaded not to mistake pearls for fodder but to wear them as adornments, would the porcine appearance be enhanced by strings of fair beads around its shapeless neck? I gravely doubt it. But all honour to our author for his attempt to draw these creatures into the fold. One is glad, too, to hear, amid the harsh clash of *vers libre* of the present day, his quiet dictum "that metre is distinctive of poetry, essential to poetry. No metre, no poetry." He upholds also very clearly the innate dignity and majesty of poetry, that alone will not permit it to be the handmaid of music. We hold that it should not even consent to be married to music as its final end; poetry should contain within itself all the musical harmony it

needs, and, as Mr. Robert Graves also insists, it must make its great appeal to the eye as well as to the ear.

The author is whole-heartedly in agreement with de Selincourt's words, " If we are to appreciate good poetry we must awaken all our reason, and not merely give way to our emotions." It is the ignoring of this truth that is responsible for the fact that the greater number of our hymns are very execrable poetry ; they attempt by excess of emotional excitation to act as an opiate to the intellect. Not that the Rev. Stephen Brown touches on hymns written for " choirs and places where they sing." His book, taken as a whole, strikes one as rather ponderous, but the writer disarms one by his asseveration of the desire to suggest rather than to lay down the law.

VI

From a vastly differing plane does Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis speak. And so confident are her judgments and so " cocksure " her quoted advice to poets that, when we read how, " for the last two or three years the entire output of English verse has passed through my hands " we feel aghast. What ? All the early daffodils under this roller ? All the white lilies and the bullrushes in the same hard grasp ? Let us weigh some of her pronouncements in order to see whether we shall unhesitatingly accept her judgments. On *Can Grande Castle*, by Miss Amy Lowell, this arbiter writes thus : It is " a book which, as far as manner is concerned, might have been written by De Quincey—De Quincey is often her equal in inspiration, but he had little inspiration. The opium eater had not the energy left for either sustained patterns or for the metaphysics of the American." Let those who love good literature thank heaven for that last mercy. As a specimen of this " type of bravura writing " some prose lines are given. In these the legions of Cæsar are described as marching through Rome—" they come," " they beat the ground," then suddenly " they " are apostrophised as " you," but retire immediately as " they " again, frightened, no doubt, by their " blood-red plumes, jarring." If De

Quincey was intoxicated with opium, Miss Amy Lowell seems to be drunk with self-conceit. On the whole we prefer De Quincey, in spite of Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis trying to " shoo " him out of the classical enclosure. As a specimen of her own style, she says, writing of a poem by Mr. Robert Graves, " I got that poem expounded to me by Mr. Robert Graves," but Mrs. Williams-Ellis is a critic of English verse, and Brutus was an honourable man.

Of the poet and his audience, she advances the theory that " perhaps two million people (persons, we should have preferred to say, but Mrs. Williams-Ellis is a critic), perhaps two million people read English," and the book which could be read by all would " probably not be one which reached a very high level of art ; only a very simple love story or cookery book could, in fact, achieve half-an-hour's tolerance from such an audience." But what *is* the fact ? The actual fact is that Shakespeare is read voluntarily in town and village throughout England, and the Germans (one of the " two million people ") read and act his plays continually ; and some hundreds of poor girls in and around London, though having to earn their living under conditions of great toil, yet love and learn Shakespeare's plays, and, thanks to the exertions of Mr. Hugh Mytton, act them most admirably ; they would not thank you for a " cookery book." There used to frequent the lanes of Kent an old tramp who was never so happy as when he was discussing or quoting Shakespeare. If, therefore, the Georgian poets desire no more than the praise of fellow Georgians, as Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis affirms that they do, then such desire is the last milestone on the road of limitation which ends in the pit of forgotten things. Fashion is the least enduring of all evanescent matters. Again, is it true, as this critic asserts, that a poet will write better poetry for a wise than for a silly public ? Does there not rather echo down the ages the truth that a true poet is a man ahead of his time ; a man, therefore, who is bound to be misunderstood or misinterpreted by the public of his day ? Dante found himself amongst violent, unresting factions, in an atmosphere where blows came before words,

and he, standing on the eminence of genius, sent forth his living words, and his work remains to be a delight to the wisest of all nations. Imagine the austere Florentine having addressed to him such words as these from Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis, " Not to take the trouble to understand his good work is as unfriendly as to praise him when he writes badly." Into what darkened place of Purgatorio would the indignant poet have put comfortable Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis, even if he spared her the Inferno ? There are poets whom it is an impertinence to praise and a presumption to blame. Of all the crowd of poetasters, does it signify whether we praise or blame them ?

It is in a deep depression of spirit that we read, " At any rate, we believe that poets and critics have reached a stage where they have achieved the judgment of a modern poem on its merits." And the sign of " merit " being, we presume, verses published in the *Spectator* under the heading " Poetry," and there the industrious and curious may discover Edith Sitwell and others, for Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis is the critic. Let us twitch our mantle blue, or red, or black, and speed away to the regions Elenore, to where, beyond the voices, there is peace.

VII

Dr. Strachan's volume, *The Soul of Modern Poetry*, is a noble attempt to place poetry on the true eminence of strength, beauty and truth. It is tinged with a gentle sadness by reason of the inexorable verdict that our contemporary verse is, on the whole, " characterised by a vagabond curiosity of matter and a tormented unrest of style." He points, of course, to notable exceptions, and he contrasts Masefield's methods in *The Widow in the Bye-street* with Wordsworth's admitted confession that he always purified his characters " from all lasting and rational causes of dislike and disgust " before he enshrined them in a poem. Now we may reasonably consider that this " dressing up " of his characters was a sign of an inherent weakness in Wordsworth's power of delineation, but, on the other hand, persistently to drag in " causes of dislike

and disgust " may equally prove a weakness of discernment on the part of Masefield. Dr. Strachan very comprehensively, and with keen insight points out the enormous gulf between the description of the prodigal son as given by the brother (the materialist) and the father (the poet). The one said, " This, thy son, which hath devoured thy living with harlots " ; the other, " This, thy brother, which was dead and is alive again," and between these two descriptions lay a vast fundamental difference, as it lies for ever between the poet and the non-poet. What the brother said was true, and the father could not deny it, but he, the father, saw in the soiled and degraded prodigal one who had been as dead and was alive again. And it is this spiritual insight that we have a right to demand from the poet. It is present in Masefield's *Everlasting Mercy*, but almost wholly absent from *The Widow in the Bye-street*. The latter might be a rhymed story from the police news, with every detail and expression that is a " rational cause of disgust " forced upon us. And if it is contended (as the brother of the prodigal contended) that it is true to actual life, then we find that the old mother's long and correctly phrased prayer is entirely false ; such a woman could not have uttered so touching and eloquent a petition. Also, if true, how came it about that the police did not discover that the murdered man was married ? If we are made to swallow falsities of this nature need we have been so battered with " causes of disgust " in the name of truth ? " Poetry, like religion, chooses the ugly only in order to fashion it into a fairer form " ; so says Dr. Strachan, but has Masefield done so in this particular poem ?

Dr. Strachan points out with sorrow that the immortal life of the soul is ignored by most modern poets. Now this may legitimately be a matter of personal regret, but it does not primarily prevent a poet from being a great master ; it is a more severe criticism to bring the charge against the modern men that, in their work, we " so often miss that background of culture and scholarship which the great Victorians possessed."

It is with some surprise that we read, "The artist (or poet) has desires or 'values,' not ideals." The mere expression in verse of "desires" has flooded the world with a lamentable quantity of rubbish. Ella Wheeler Wilcox affirmed that she always put her desires into verse. She, however, called it poetry. The critic should possess values, but ought not the poet to have rather ideals?

The dictum that "the increasing popular interest to-day in psychology has had some baleful effects both on poetry and on the novel" must be endorsed warmly. Alfred Noyes's poem, *Torch Bearers*, is quoted as a sign that poetry is again awakening to the romance of science, and it is "an indication that the long poem may be restored to its place in our literature." This is Dr. Strachan's opinion. Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis, however, is not sure that she does not "from time to time" agree that "of Alfred Noyes nothing can be written in extenuation." We are back amongst the "Voices" once more!

A part of Mrs. Fredegond-Shove's poem, *The New Ghost*, is quoted by Dr. Strachan. In "this little poem, unique in modern poetry," he says, "marvellous use is made of all that is symbolic and suggestive of immortality." It may be so, but what immortal ear or eye can hear and see without discomfort two, at least, of the lines,

> And seeing him, the naked trees began shivering,
> And all the birds cried out aloud as it were late spring.

The word "began" is as a lion in the path, and in pausing before the strong beast the reader falls shudderingly on "shivering" and on "were late spring." It can hardly be termed "almost perfect poetic expression." Dr. Strachan has, perhaps, permitted his emotional delight in the symbolism of immortal life, as expressed in this poem, to overcome his intellectual acumen. But his book, *The Soul of Modern Poetry*, repays careful reading, and owes its origin to thoughtful observation and to a wide knowledge of the Moderns.

ARTHUR HOOD.

MAJESTY

I AM majesty, older than all men ;
Older than antiquity, new as Paradise.
When the earth was chaos, I was living then,
I was the Dawn Word fashioning the skies.
Older than Jehovah—for that they called Him not
When the sky first mothered her fierce-blown tapers—
Watched I the spinning world, lunion and hot,
Summoning her bridal veil of snow-pure vapours.

I am kingliness past earth's believing.
Egypt and the Pharaohs housed me for a day ;
Tempt, throne and pyramid my royalty receiving,
Greece and Rome endured me till their splendour fell away.
I was Jacob's ladder that led to Heaven's floor,
Watched I the seraphim ascending and descending ;
I am the mystery behind the king's door,
I knew no beginning and I have no ending.

I am Majesty. I dwell in all men,
But many live contented with a pauper's pleasure ;
Feeble is their hearing, though I summon them again,
Bid them forth to find the key to the king's treasure.
I was the beginning, before the world began,
Builder of the atom, genius of the sod,
I am immortality within the breast of man . . .
I am Divinity, I am God !

ANGELA MORGAN.

NEW YORK

THE heart of all the world am I !
A city, great, and grim, and grand !
Man's monument to mighty man !
Superb ! Incomparable ! Alone !
Greater than ancient Babylon
The giant-walled ! Greater than Tyre,
Sea-Queen ! Greater than Nineveh,

Pearl of the East! Greater than Rome,
Stupendous reared, magnificent!
Greater than Paris, city fey!
Greater than London, fog-enmeshed!
Greater than Venice! Vienna!
Or Petrograd! Greater than these!
That am I! Mark my high towers!
Mark my arched bridges! Mark my piers,
A thousand fingers river-thrust!
Mark my windows, jewels aflash!
Mark my thoroughfares, crevice-slashed!
Mark my people, thronging, busy,
Innumerable, life-motes of mine!
The heart of all the world am I!
A city, great, and grim, and grand!
Man's monument to mighty man!
Superb! Incomparable! Alone!

Builded upon a million hopes
And fears! a billion joys and pains!
Wrought by a dauntless human will!
Raised, stone by stone, and beam by beam,
Upon the dreams and disillusionments
Of the souls of men! See! stranger, see!
Survey me from my utmost peak!
Note how I rise into the skies,
Granite, and steel, and steel again!
Note how my ramparts point the sun!
Note how my breathing shreds the blue
With dazzlement of smoke and steam!
Note how my streets, sere, crude and deep,
Long canyons in my titan form!
Note how my rivers, ship-begemmed,
Gird me with zones of industry!
The heart of all the world am I!
My shoulders vant the vaulted sky!
My stature rives the bonds of height!
My helmet darts with gleaming gold!
My valiant plumes are winged with white!

My entrails cleave the cold quicksands !
My feet are sunk in whirling seas !
My living arms of glittering steel
Reach out to clasp the earth about !
The heart of all the world am I !
A city, great, and grim, and grand !
Man's monument to mighty man !
Superb ! Incomparable ! Alone !

ARTHUR CREW INMAN.

NIGHTMARE

(An Actual Dream of Moonlight)

O'ER this dread night
There hangs the shadow of the unforeseen ;
A fearsome weirdness clings about the place,
And I must keep the vigil here, alone.
The moon shines cold about the windless trees,
Cold on the lifeless stone.

Day will not break again. O never morning
Gladden new life in new-awakened eyes ;
No soft wind in the fragrance of the dawn
Blow the sad shadow-clouds across the skies—
And time will pass no more.

In the eternal hush of endless night,
Naught lives but I.

I feel the horror of my fate-to-be
In the black, brooding shadows of the trees,
And in the pitiless light
Of the cold moon upon the dead white stones—
And in the desolation of the night,
I wait the coming of the great Unknown,
Helpless ; and still ; and utterly alone.

EDNA A. KAHLA.

GOD CALLED ME EARLY

SOFTLY to-day
God called me early
When over the fields
The dew was pearly.

The cool dawn-wind
Came in to stroke me ;
Below my window
A throstle woke me.

He sang alone
As dawn was breaking.
I never have known
So sweet a waking.

MOLLY YOUNG.

THE POET'S PORTION

WHO shall compute the poet's power ?
A wizard he of magic white,
Who learns from every passing hour
New spells from out the day and night ;
He walks the real world apart,
Akin to beggars and to kings,
In converse with the human heart
And with the soul of unseen things.

Nor age nor youth are his alone,
Nor clime, nor season, all things pass ;
Their inner meaning swiftly shown,
And yet as shadows in a glass.
He takes his fill of all things fair
In earth beneath and heaven above,
Receiving with a thankful prayer
The sacrament of life and love.

All joys are his in time and space,
  All lonely longings wring his breast,
Where mystic meanings interlace
  Divinest truths but half expressed,
A thrill of ecstasy, and yet
  When trembling on his mortal tongue
The disappointment and regret,
  The immortal songs remain unsung!

BENJAMIN GEORGE AMBLER.

STARLINGS

"What was a speck expands into a star."—BROWNING, *Paracelsus*.

WHENCE come those sequined habits gay
All powdered o'er with gold?
Which augureth a pollen shower
Whene'er thy wings unfold?
Some fairy kind of yellow snow,
Stored up by warmth—not cold.

Methinks one starry night there fell,
When still the earth was young,
A meteoric foam that broke
Thy swaying nests among,
And on protective satin plumes
Its beads of light out-flung.

That so thy name inferreth yet
A stellar origin,
To teach us how thy twinkling forms
To distant worlds are kin;
And God who casts His saffron dust
The twilit depths within,

Took thought thy throbbing breasts to sow
With seeds of beauty rare,
Impartial whether vast or small
The soil designed to bear,
Since star and bird have both their place
Beneath His sacred care.

GLADYS SINGERS-BIGGER.

TO HELEN, DEAD

I

THOU art not Helen ; not for all my needing
Art thou she, with the lilies at thy head.
Helen would flame to rapture at the red
Enchanting rose thy fingers are not heeding,
Melt to a tear at my first word of pleading,
Tremble to laughter at my sorrow sped.
Who art thou then upon they flowr'd bed,
Fair, still, remotely silent, naught conceding ?

Last night I longed for Helen as I paced
The moon-drenched garden thick with rose's scent ;
All in a moment she was by my side,
Yet, 'ere I turned to clasp her in my haste,
Shook her bright hair across her face, and went . . .
'Twas in that hour, they say, that Helen died.

II

But in that hour, her presence stood confest
As to one blind, each sharpened sense aware
Of her pervading self. The very air
Sighed Helen, Helen, Helen . . . Swiftly lest
I had not heard, I felt her fingers rest,
Light as a butterfly, upon my hair,
Cool as the touch of ivory they were,
And to my spirit made hers manifest. . . .

Only the moon, like some pale cameo
Set in a star-embroidered veil, pours gold
On thee amid thy starry lilies laid ;
Mysterious thou art as she, and oh !
Than she, more passionless, austerely cold,
In thy white beauty bridally array'd.

III

So without sorrow, will I leave thee, Sleep,
Thou lovely quiet stranger. I will go
Seek Helen where her own red roses blow.
Stay thou among thy lilies in thy deep
Serenity. The little night winds leap
In the dim garden. Presently, I know,
Like dropping moonbeams on the grass below
Her silent feet shall through the darkness sweep.

Not for mine eyes shall be her loveliness,
  Yet shall her nearness be to me for sight,
    Until that hour when I shall wait a space
And she come not unto my loneliness. . . . .
  So, drifting through despair into delight,
    An unfamiliar dawn shall bring her face.

M. E. MORRIS.

THE SOULS IN PRISON

I PASSED beyond the barrier of the tomb
  Into a cheerless land
Where all was dead, as when the winter gloom
  Touches with icy hand
The verdure of the earth's congealing womb
  And makes the rivers stand.

It was a realm of banishèd delight;
  (Nor nightingale nor lark
To hail the day or close the eye of night—)
  A silence grim and stark,
As when eclipse hides sun or moon from sight
  And all the land is dark.

A lurid twilight, as when sullen ground
  Or apprehensive tree
Waits till the rumble of the thunder sound
  Foretells a wrath to be,
So loomed the heavy stillness and around
  Stretched a black, angry sea.

Nor sight nor sound was on that tideless shore,
  Nor any that made moan,
And where I would, I wandered evermore
  (My will was all mine own.)
And never, never had I felt before
  So utterly alone.

And then the agony of a silent voice
  Beat throbbing on my brain,

"Lo! I am with thee, comrade of thy choice
For happiness or pain:
Rejoice with me!" and at the word "Rejoice,"
The blood froze in each vein—

"Here is thy portion, where a place is given
For thee and me to dwell—
And I am of thy making: hast thou striven
To mould me ill or well?
For in Remembrance wilt thou find thy Heaven
Or thine abiding Hell.

"Remove the threads that hold my veil in place,
(Threads from the web, Despair),
O, fellow prisoner, look upon my face
And tell me I am fair.
I am the spirit of forgotten days,
Ghost of the things that were.

"Come, from my brow the covering withdraw,
And claim me here for thine"—
The throbbing ceased: the veil I loosed in awe
That face to unconfine.
It fell—I shrieked and fled—oh! God, I saw
The face—and that was mine.

ROBERT BURNESS.

* * * *

The American section of THE POETRY REVIEW has been received with great appreciation by poets, editors and publishers in the United States. The initial issue has brought our Associate Editor a flood of congratulations and assurances of cordial and generous co-operation, the result of which will be seen in early issues. The next number will contain a poem by a sister of ex-President Roosevelt and a survey of "The Dynamics of American Poetry," compiled from the opinions expressed at our invitation by the foremost poets of the United States on their own work—a very happy and original causerie.

* * * *

The Rev. Hugh Chapman and Mrs. Holman Hunt have become vice-presidents of the Poetry Society. The association of the sympathetic Chaplain of the Savoy with the Society promises to be an active one, with the Chapel of Bohemia as a spiritual Centre, tending towards the restoration of poetry to its ancient place again as the inspirer and consoler of all adventurous souls.

THE ULTIMATE WEST IN POETRY

East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

IN our last review we considered internationalism of American poetry. Our present survey carries us across the American continent to our Pacific seaboard. A different world this—so different that but for the poet's vision the twain might never meet.

When the poet reaches California he finds a land so rich in the elements that make poetry that there is no glancing back, and through the wealth of his visions and images and dreams in this land of poetry he carries the dwellers of the Eastern world with him in his new found happiness. Joaquin Miller (1841–1913) in his "Song of Creation" (*The Poetical Works of Joaquin Miller*, edited by Stuart P. Sherman; Putnam) calls our attention and charms us with the following felicitous picture:

How fair is San Francisco Bay
When golden stars consort and when
The moon pours silver paths for men,
And care walks by the other way!
Huge ships, black-bellied, lay below
Broad yellow flags from silken Chind,
Round, blood-red banners from Nippon
Like to her sun at sudden dawn—
Brave battle-ships as white as snow,
With bannered stars tossed to the wind,
Warm as a kiss when love is kind.

'Twas twilight, such soft, twilight night
As only Californians know,
When faithful love is forth and when
The Bay lies bathed in mellow light;
And perfumed breath and softened breeze
Blows far from Honolulu's seas—
From sundown seas in afterglow—
When song sits at the feet of men
And pipes, low-voiced as mated dove,
For love to measure step with love.

Less than a century ago the Ultimate West was monopolised by the Indians, of whom we are told (in the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, edited by William Peterfield Trent, John Erskine, Stuart Sherman and Carl Van Dorn), "Any Indian who had a poetic experience could make a song about it, and apparently every Indian did."

We will pass the Indians by for the time being, and also the padres and their minstrels and the bards, and meet the pioneer poets of the pioneer age of California, led by Francis Bret Harte (1839–1902), born in Albany, N.Y., 1854, he removed to California; Charles Warren Stoddard (1843–1909), born in Rochester, N.Y., and was educated at the University of California; Joaquin Miller (1841–1913), closely followed by the contemporary poets, led by Edwin Markham; born in 1852 in Oregon City, Oregon, at the age of five he went with his widowed mother to California; Ambrose Bierce, born in Ohio in 1842; Edward Rolland Sill (1841–87), born in Windsor, Conn., spent several years in California after 1860; George Sterling, born in 1869 at Sag Harbour, New York, later moved to California, where he still lives; Richard Edward White; John Vance Cheney, born in 1848 in Groveland, New York, removed to California in 1876; and a dozen other poets who represent the later poets of the Ultimate West.

American poetry has rapidly travelled West with the constant shifting of the Western boundaries of Progress. Less than a century ago Chicago was the Far West, and the boundaries were swiftly carried westward until, upon reaching California, the shores of the Pacific made that land of sunshine the Ultimate West.

To recall some of the characteristics of the great pioneer poets of the Ultimate West. When Bret Harte's name is mentioned his "Heathen Chinee" comes immediately into the mind with its caricature quality, and in the same breath we find ourselves repeating his exquisite *Angelus* with the music of far-off bells and the perfumed smoke of wreathing incense.

The *Angelus* is a poem of eight lovely stanzas, the first being :

Bells of the Past, whose long forgotten music,
Still fills the wide expanse
Tingeing the sober twilight of the Present
With colour and romance.

The last verse :

Your voices break and falter in the darkness—
Break, falter and are still ;
And veiled and mystic, like the Host descending
The sun sinks from the hill.

* * * *

Bret Harte tells of the padres' days and their romance in *The Miracle of Padre Junipers*, and many more, and of the mining days in his immortal poems : *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, *Col. Starbottle*, *M'liss*, *Miggles* and *Truthful James*.

Charles Warren Stoddard was his friend and co-worker, and felt it to be the greatest honour of his life to be edited by his friend, Francis Bret Harte.

The poetry of Stoddard has an unforgetable charm, of the beautiful kind, and through his love of the sea, which washes the California shore, he made some imperishable pictures with his art :

I watch the waves that seem to breathe
And pant unceasingly beneath
Their silken coverings that cringe
As flecked with swirls of froth, they seethe,
And whip and flutter to a fringe.

He loved the blue California heavens—

White caravans of cloud go by,
Across the desert of bright sky.

He loved the rain—

Transparent curtains of the rain
Are sweeping down to me, delighting
The dusty trees, where I have lain
The broken grasses righting.

In the brief compass of a sonnet Stoddard caught the

immense beauty and wonder of the Yosemite in his sonnet by that title.

In it the Falls are

> A thousand silvered arteries.

His *The Bells of San Gabriel* is a classic, of which the last lines are :

> And every note of every bell
> Sang Gabriel ! rang Gabriel !
> In the town that is left, the tale to tell,
> Of Gabriel—the Archangel.

He sang also of the South Seas, and a treasure is the poem-sonnet, called *Otaheite*. Of Stoddard it has been said : " No poet in any land ever wore the silver bit and bridle of Petrarch more beautifully."

> Beautiful siren, thy voluptuous vales
> Invite the weary. At thy raptured quest
> The mariner let hang his mildewed sails,
> In bowers whose balm betrays their hiding place,
> Never to rouse from his enchanted rest.
>
> * * * *

The people who lived in the pioneer California days have passed away, but California's beauties and the grandeur of the Pacific remain to lure the poet. Each new generation finds these beauties inspiration for poetry.

With the westward march of industrial activities the California setting remained unchanged, but the activities of the people have altered. Industry has brought economic problems and diversified stimulus which the eager sympathetic genius of Edwin Markham has immortalized.

Mr. Markham's *Man With the Hoe* is too well known to require quoting, but few people know how he was impelled to write it and his reaction to the criticisms of what readers believed he meant. His explanation reveals his philosophy and his deep-set humanitarian nature. " Some thousands of my countrymen have been good enough to point out in the public prints . . . certain misrepresentations of labour in my *Man With the Hoe*, and after having read for twelve

months what these critics say I meant to say in the poem, it seems to me that I may be allowed to express my own opinion on this and some kindred matters.

"The Hoeman of my poem does not mean every man with a hoe. Thoreau hoed his bean-field. He says that when his hoe tickled against the stones the music echoed to the woods and sky and was an accompaniment to his labour that yielded an instant and immeasurable crop. Thoreau as a hoeman could gather this spiritual harvest, because he had the upward-looking and the light, the music and the dream. I did not mean Thoreau.

"The Hoeman of my poem does not refer to the farmer as a class. I did not say the poem was written after seeing the American farmer riding rosily on his reaper in the chromo.

"But, instead, I say in the heading of every authorised copy of the poem that it was written after seeing Millet's picture. And here let me say that picture is not *The Angelus*, as hundreds of misinformed censors have declared. Naturally the poem should never be judged without thinking of the picture.

"I am often asked how I came to write *The Man With the Hoe*. I am myself in a limited sense one of the 'Hoemanry.' During all my early manhood I was a working man under hard and incorrigible conditions. The smack of the soil and the whir of the forge are in my blood. I know every coign and cranny of ranch and range."

He knew the prose and poetry, but why should some be ground and broken? That thought lies back of the poem. "Why should so many go down under the wheel of the world to hopeless ruin as far as human eye can see?" Markham asks. "Fourteen years ago I came upon a small print, and it struck my imagination, and I jotted down notes, and ten years ago I saw the original picture. Millet s *Man With the Hoe* is to me the most solemnly impressive of all modern paintings—the type of industrial oppression in all lands and in all labours. . . . Carlyle has espoused the cause of this man. Ruskin describes England's hoemanry in these terrible words: 'We manufacture

everything but men—we blanch cotton, strengthen steel, and refine sugar, shape pottery, but to form a living spirit never enters into our estimate of advantages.'

"Do I need to say that the Hoe poem is not a protest against labour? No—it is my soul's word against the degradation of labour, the oppression of man by man. I believe in labour. Dante of the starry soul served apprenticeship among an apothecary's pots."

Mr. Markham's home is in Oakland, California; a bicycle stands at the door.

> How will you ever straighten up this shape;
> Touch it again with immortality,
> Give back the upward looking and the light;
> Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
> Make right the immemorial infamies,
> Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

is Markham's challenge to society—the world's society.

In his *Joy Makers* he tells us

> Time's touch can dim our sorrows and destroy,
> But only art can turn them into joy.
>
> * * * *

Markham's appreciation of Nature combined with a lighter mood are shown in several poems. *In a Corn Field* we read:

> Who was it passed me, his body a'throbbing?
> Who but Sir Humble Bee home from his robbing.
>
> What is that crackle of chariots whirling?
> 'Tis Cricket Achillis where green smoke is curling.
>
> And who is it comes on the bloom-ocean steering?
> Bold Dragonfly Corteg, a'tacking and veering.

Ambrose Bierce (1842–) supplied the satyrical note to the group of the Ultimate West. In *The Spirit of the Sponge* he tells us that—

> "He followed his nose and found a place in hell."

In his *Coward* we read—

> " Hard fate indeed to feel at every breath
> His burden of identity till death.
> No moment's respite from the immortal load,
> To think himself a serpent or a toad,
> Or dream, with a divine, estatic glow,
> He's long been dead and canonized, a crow.

An iconoclast, he jokes in his *Hell:*

> The friends who stood about my bed
> Looked down upon my face and said,
> " God's will be done—the fellow's dead."
> * * * * *
> " Ah, no, this is not hell," I cried,
> " The preachers ne'er so greatly lied—
> This is Earth's spirit glorified!
>
> " Good souls do not in Hades dwell,
> And look, there's John P. Irish!" " Well,"
> The voice said, " that's what makes it hell!"

Poking fun at his friend Miller and at his would-be followers, in his *Borrowed Brains*, he advises them:

> Joaquin Miller's cut his hair,
> Hasten, hasten writer folk—
> In the gutters rake and poke,
> If by God's exceeding grace,
> You may hit upon the place
> Where the barber threw at length
> Samson's literary strength.
> Find it, find it if you can,
> Happy the successful man!
> He has but to put one strand
> In his beaver's inner band,
> And his intellect will soar
> As it never did before!
> While an inch of it remains
> He will noted be for brains,
> And at last ('twill so befall)
> Fit to cease to write at all!

Edward Roland Sill contributed much to the poetry of the Ultimate West. In an essay of Edward Roland Sill among his prose studies, *Principles of Criticism*, there is a statement of the ideal his poetry followed, which concludes: "The poem should leave one purer and richer than it found one."

I quote from the poem *If:*

> If the great cloud-ships would not float and drift
> Across such blue all the calm afternoon,
> If night were not so hushed; or if the moon
> Might pause for ever by that pearly rift,
> Nor fill the garden with its flood again,
> If the world were not what it still must be,
> Then might I live forgetting love and thee.

Quoting from the *Things That Will Not Die!*—

> And I rejoice that love shall never seem
> So perfect as it ever was to be,
> But endlessly that inner haunting dream
> Each heart shall see,
> Hinted in every dawn's fresh purity
> Hopelessly shadowed in each sunset's gleam.

His *California Winter* abounds in lovely lines:

> And the vague fragrance in the garden walks
> Is but a doubtful dream of mignonette,
> In some smooth spot, under a sleeping oak
> That has not dreamed of such a thing as Spring,
> The ground has stolen a kiss from the cool sun.

The following from one of his longer poems, *The Venus of Milo*, conveys the sweep of his genius:

> Then fell a vision to Praxiteles.
>
> Men call thee Love, is there no holier name
> Than hers, the foam-born, laughter-loving dame?
> Nay, for there is than love no holier name:
> * * * * *
> Thou art the love celestial seeking still
> The soul beneath the form; the serene will;
> The wisdom of whose deeps the sages dream;

The unseen beauty that doth faintly gleam
In stars, and flowers and waters where they roll;
The unheard music whose faint echoes even
Make whosoever hears a homesick soul
Thereafter, till he follow it to heaven.

* * * * *

Thy quiet mouth, I know not if it smile,
Or if in some wise pity thou wilt weep,—
Little as one may tell some summer morn,
Whether the dreaming brightness is most glad
Or wonderfully sad—

* * * * *

Oh save me from the haste and noise and heat
That spoil life's music, sweet.

* * * * *

In a lighter vein, he warns, in *An Adage from the Orient:*

At the punch-bowl's brink,
Let the thirsty think
What they say in Japan;

First the man takes a drink
Then the drink takes a drink
Then the drink takes the man.

George Sterling, another Easterner, in this case from Long Island, a close friend of Ambrose Bierce, to whom he dedicated his *Testimony of the Sun*, strikes a solemn note:

Ah! glad to thy decree I bow,
From whose unquestioned hand did fall
Beyond a lesser to recall,
The solemn laurels on my brow.

* * * * *

With Swinburnean depth and music, *His Memorial Day:*

And we above the war-won graves
Stand conscious of their homage due,
We wander where the cypress waves,
Sad for the dead we never knew.

From whom we gathered, in regret,
Tribute of unregretful breath;
On whom the panoply we set
That molders on the road of Death.

So now their time held consecrate
We greet in hall and temple, or—
Where summer calling at the gate
Has thrown her blossoms in before.

And rose and marble clasp the dead,
And gleam about the ghostly court,
To quieter camp the soldier led,
The seaman to a farther port.

How deep they lie from voice or tear!
With silence how supremely blest!—
So far in peace they cannot hear
The grieving pines above their rest.

* * * * *

A sense of this their dreamlessness
Arises to the mortal brow.
We feel their quietudes confess
To war's futility—that now

Above the dust so swift to slay
Alight the lily's tender snows,
And on the long foregiven clay
Its foeman's children loose the rose.

Set to duration of the bronze
The soldier stands all ages guest.
Harness of high renown he dons,
But sweeter fame the flowers attest.

* * * * *

O timeless light beyond the years
Illume Thy mysteries of fate
Absolve the future of its fears
And loose us from the laws of hate.

These are the outstanding poets of the Ultimate West upon whose art time has pronounced, and the extent of whose influence upon American poetry has been ascertained. In future letters we will present poems from the pens of the present generation of the poets of the Ultimate West.

TEARS :

" Behold, who ever wept, and in his tears
Was happier far than others in their smile."

PETRARCH, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Moore, Scott, Byron, Keats, Tennyson and scores of other poets of yesteryear wrote about tears. But just as the effect of the tears shed in their generation could not last for our generation, we must have our own poems on tears.

Studying recent production with differing treatment of the same subjects in poetry, we find in *Poems of Arthur O'Shaughnessy* (selected and edited by Wm. Alexander Percy : Yale University Press) a musical interpretation in " The Fountain of Tears," from which poem the following first and fourth verses are taken :

" If you go over desert and mountain,
Far into the country of sorrow,
To-day and to-night and to-morrow,
And maybe for months and for years ;
You shall come, with a heart that is bursting
For trouble and toiling and thirsting,
You shall certainly come to the fountain
At length,—to the Fountain of Tears.

. . . . .

" For it grows and it grows, as though leaping
Up higher the more one is thinking ;
And ever its tunes go on sinking
More poignantly into the ears :
Yea, so blessed and good seems that fountain,
Reached after dry desert and mountain,
You shall fall down at length in your weeping
And bathe your sad face in the tears."

Miss Lizette Woodworth Reese, whose poems in *A Branch of May* (Mosher) lead Miss Jessie B. Rittenhouse to aptly speak of Miss Reese's " beautiful art " and of Miss Reese's song as " all of one magic," considers her sonnet " Tears " her best work :

" When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun ;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears ;
A rose choked in the grass ; an hour of fears ;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat ;
The burst of music down an unlistening street—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep ;
Homer his sight, David his little lad ! "

I expressed my thoughts on the subject in a sonnet which I sent to Miss Reese, who wrote me a charming note. My sonnet reads :

" Leave us then tears, in mercy leave us tears !
They are the flood-tide of our earthly woe,
Renewing and restoring as they flow—
They wash away the sorrows of the years.
Down corridors of disappointment, fears,
There lulls a gentle fountain soothing, low,
The Fount of Tears . . . Good angels, they bestow
The rhythm born of heaven for saddened ears.
No one who sorrows ever walks alone !
On the broad marble steps where Sorrow dwells,
Each sorrowing, accompanied, appears . . .
Yea ! did you think our dead would us disown ?
They stand by in our thought, like sentinels . . .
Nay, take the laughter, rather, leave us tears."

* * * *

Jeanne Robert Foster in her new volume, *Rock-Flower* (published by Boni and Liveright), has included a sonnet treating the subject in another mood :

" To-day, to-day, I shall weep easeful tears
Over my lovely self—for who shall find
All that I was . . .? Poor Love on earth is blind,
So I shall fill a vase for all the years
I knew myself, and as death's summons nears,
Cry on the streets : O I was fair and kind
And there were moonlit ways within my mind ;
You would have loved me—will you take my tears ?
These drops are for the little child that knew
The sun was hot, that skies were sometimes blue ;
And these are tears for shy sweet maindenhood,
And some are for the ache within my blood.
But take them all—to-day my eyes must weep
For what was earth's—God my spent soul will keep."

To these sonnets should be added *To a Tear*, by Minnie Ferris Hauenstein. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. 1922.)

Within the prismic confines of thy sphere
Is held the pathos of a wide world's cry,
Grief's jewel thou, and laughter's fantasy,
Love's shining herald, Pain's one constant peer;
Caught in a child's blue eye, all crystal clear
Thou seemest heaven's dew from heaven's far sky,
The rainbow's end on rosebud cheeks to lie,
A universal message thine, O tear.

Wherever life hath woven its changeful web,
Scarlet of sorrow, smiles of silver hue,
Whenever human fortunes flow and ebb
There art thou, strong to solace and renew:
Jesus, for love of Lazarus, felt thy touch
And Magdalen melted, knew thee overmuch.

ROMEO AND JULIET

Once more the American public has realized Mrs. Browning's easy prophecy regarding Shakespeare: "With tears and laughter for all time!" Our public is a notorious supporter of good, bad and indifferent on the stage, but it prefers the good. As Dryden expressed it:

"Shakespeare's magic could not copied be:
Within that circle none durst walk but he."

Hence our public bid for places to see *Romeo and Juliet* played by the fascinating Jane Cowl, of whom one critic said:

"I think Miss Cowl easily the best Juliet I have ever seen, but she had the advantage of being supported by even more easily the best of the Romeos, and a body of players excellently suited to the remaining parts."

I always felt that Byron missed an opportunity when he wrote lines "To Romance" with nothing better than

"Parent of golden dreams, Romance!
Auspicious queen of childish joys,
Who leadest along, in airy dance,
Thy votive train of girls and boys."

Mention of *Romeo and Juliet* would have conveyed to those susceptible the whole gamut of varieties of appeals of romance, but, of course, Byron's migratory romancing could not be harmonized with Juliet's boundless constancy expressed in the lines:

"My bounty is as boundless as the sea
My love as keep; the more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite."

In a season of short duration, of even such unusually good performances as Miss Emily Stevens' starring in the *Sporting Thing To Do, Romeo and Juliet* continued without lapse of interest. The hundredth performance took place on April 20, when the players supporting Miss Cowl in *Romeo and Juliet* made two presentations to the star—a facsimile reproduction of an early edition of Shakespeare and a great bouquet of flowers made up of the flowers mentioned in his plays. The vellum-bound copy of the play presented to Miss Cowl is a reproduction of the first folio edition of 1623 from the Chatsworth copy in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire. The flowers were tied with a gold-embossed streamer proclaiming Miss Cowl's record in her hundredth performance in her rôle.

To appropriately celebrate Shakespeare's Tercentenary Miss Cowl offered prizes to the high school pupils of Great New York for the best essays on *Romeo and Juliet.* The competition was undertaken with the sanction of the Board of Education of New York and twenty-five schools competed. About 3,000 essays were turned in. The first, second and third prizes were awarded by the English Departments in each school and a special award was made to the writer of the best essay selected from the first prize winners. This award went to Israel Convesser, 15 years old, of the Eastern District High School of Brooklyn. The judges were: Walter Pritchard Eaton, Dr. Samuel Tucker, President of the Drama League, and Dr. John H. Finley, of the editorial staff of the *New York Times*, which printed the winning essay.

The poetry editor of our esteemed contemporary, *The Literary Digest*, aptly remarks that "If this is not poetry itself, we know of no other classification for it: whether it competes with Boilieu or Shelley or Aristotle who discussed the art of poetry is no concern of ours," and concludes by suggesting that "It will furnish texts for discussion."

"CONCERNING THE PRICE OF POETRY"

Under this heading the *New York Times* prints an illuminating editorial which reads as follows:

"A letter received from F. C. Melcher, of *The Publishers' Weekly*, reveals, though its writer does not say, that the man who complained at having been asked to pay $5 for a copy of Mr. Housman's *Last Poems*, made the mistake of going for it to a dealer who specialises in books that are more or less rare and in first editions. For obvious reasons the dealer assumed that the would-be buyer wanted the original London edition of the poems, and said nothing about the American edition that was issued at about the same time

and can be obtained from regular booksellers at a normal price in any desired numbers.

"That being the case, it is all right for the collectors of first editions to play as much as they please their little game of speculation for a rise, and the people who merely want to read what Mr. Housman has to say in poetical finality can view the sport with indifference.

"But Mr. Melcher thinks that instead of scolding collectors for spending their good money as they choose, and denying to them any interest in literature as such, it would be better to note the fact that Mr. Housman's book has been something like a 'best seller' both in this country and in England. That can be taken, he thinks, as indicating the existence in both countries of a widespread appreciation of real literary merit.

"This suggestion is worthy of consideration, particularly as Mr. Housman, while he hardly can be ranked among the great poets, really is a poet—a man with something to say and the ability to say it clearly and vigorously. Especially is he to be praised for refusing to regard his work as done when he has produced the rough draft of a poem, a habit into which so many of the proudly modern have fallen. His poems are not 'free'—they have the form and structure which are, or at least used to be held, an essential characteristic of poetry. His lines all can be scanned and he would be ashamed of a false rhyme.

"In other words, he presents a finished product, instead of an unfinished one, and is a good workman as well as a good poet. That many folk see this, and because of it disprove the charge that 'nobody buys poetry,' is indeed a cause for satisfaction."

We wish more of the editors of our big dailies would state editorially what they think of poetry and poets in the sanctum sanctorum!

ANTHOLOGIES:

If *vox populi* is to be *vox dei* in poetry, as the world wants it to be in political systems, then anthologies must be held in high regard because they are counted among the best sellers. The real poet often revolts against the idea of having had some poems by different poets arbitrarily selected and put between covers to be held thereafter as the representative poems of those writers. No matter what is included, both the poet and the poetry lover often find their favourites were not included, hence the objection to the anthologies.

But those who cannot afford to purchase several hundred books of poetry each year, or have not the time or inclination to read several

hundred books of poetry, welcome the anthologies, even with their deficiencies—hence they are listed with the best sellers.

Among the offerings of American publishers are the following noteworthy volumes:

Anthology of Magazine Verse, 1922, edited by Wm. Stanley Braithwaite, who, as usual, made a liberal selection of the choice magazine poems.

Roosevelt as the Poets Knew Him, edited by Charles Hanson Towne and Clara Thackeray Hilton (Charles Scribner's Sons) is an anthology comprising over 150 poems about our ex-President Roosevelt, written by 118 American and six British poets.

The New Spirit in English Verse, compiled by Ernest Guy Pertwee (E. P. Dutton Co.) has already been noticed with appreciation in THE POETRY REVIEW.

Girl's Book of Verse, edited by Mary Gould Davis, Supervisor of *Story Telling in the New York Public Library* (Frederick A. Stokes Co.) is a treasury of old and new poems, admirably selected by Miss Davis, who has had an uncommon chance to learn and has learned what girls like in poetry and has undertaken to supply it in her book.

An Anglo-Saxon Verse-Book, edited by W. J. Sedgefield, Smith Professor of English Language in the University of Manchester (Longmans), contains the most representative and original parts of the earliest poetic literature.

Eight More Harvard Poets, edited by S. Foster Damon and Robert Silliman Hillyer, published by Brentano's, will be more fully reviewed in a coming letter.

Little Masterpieces of Poetry, edited by Henry Van Dyke, with the assistance of Hardin Craig and Asa Don Dickison (Doubleday-Page), comprises six separate books included in one volume, each of the six books having its own introduction and index, and represent the careful selection of its editors from the best poems printed during the past fifteen years, of the most meritorious poems selected "for the poetic pleasure which they impart to a healthy mind."

* * * *

Mrs. William Brown Meloney, Secretary of the National Council for Better Homes in America, announces the selection of the twenty leading books to make an ideal library, out of two hundred books suggested by college presidents, librarians and editors. Emerson's Essays and the *Home Book of Verse*, edited by Burton E. Stevenson, are among the books selected.

* * * *

In my last letter I noted the use of poems to introduce reviews of novels. Apropos comes a notice from E. P. Dutton and Co. stating

that Emma Malcoskey, the author of the forthcoming novel, *The Debutante*, found the motif of her plot in Kipling's lines:

"I bear the sins of sinful men,
That have no sin of my own;
They drive me forth to heaven's wrath
Unpastured and alone."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

* * * *

The Poetry Number of the *Saturday Review* contained some wise general remarks in accord with the affirmations of THE POETRY REVIEW:

"Poetry, if it enters into the lives of people at all, is apt to be treated as an indigestible sugar-plum and not as food necessary for keeping body and soul together. And yet it should form a daily part of our spiritual life, like bread in the physical life of a peasant. The woman who takes a book of poems instead of a novel to read in bed is a rare creature, but possibly a happier one than she whose last hour of waking is spent following the psycho-analysis of a morbid novel. . . .

"Poetry and the spirit of the poet is eternal. All discussions about old ways and new ways are absurd. Edith Sitwell's poems do not lack the essential that we find in the verse of the T'ang poet Kao-Shih. It is as foolish to cavil at new methods of thought as to say that Helen is no longer beautiful because she wears strange garments, or that Cleopatra's feet are not slim and tender because she has discarded sandals for high heels. The subject of a poem, and the manner in which it is presented to us, is of no account; all that is important is whether it is poetry or not. This is sometimes forgotten in the squabbles of various groups who make more noise shouting of the worthlessness of their adversaries' idol than when praising the one they worship. Human nature gleans rosy satisfaction in being superior to appreciation.

"But the noise of the grumbler can never be loud enough to drown the voice of true beauty. It is heard and re-echoed in the strangest places and whispered by the most unlikely people. From a high office-stool a man will quote words written by an age-dead poet, and a school girl will look shy because she had felt impelled to say aloud words she had once read. In most of us there is the germ of the love of poetry, but we do not encourage this germ to develop. It is treated as something of which to be ashamed, and is washed away by the disinfectant of stupid chaff instead of being allowed to grow into a safeguard for repressed emotions that burst out in ways quite other than beautiful."

"SALMA" AND OTHER POETIC PLAYS.

IN *Salma* (John Murray, 3s. 6d.) Captain L. Cranmer-Byng has written a play that has several elements of originality. The setting is not hackneyed, for the events of the play happened in Cintra about 900 A.D., in that exotic and oriental atmosphere which then pervaded Portugal and Spain; and the plot is not hackneyed either, though its originality lies not so much in the actual treatment and development as in the precipitation of the events by characterisation usually alien to the Western drama. Probably to an audience steeped in the psychology of the East, or, rather of that orientalism which is Moorish and Arab, the originality might not be so marked; but to a Western audience, whether spectators or readers, the originality is manifest, and upon this point the author is to be congratulated.

In criticising a play, three aspects have to be considered, and they have to be considered equally. These aspects are: language, movement and characterisation. *Salma* is written in what, technically, is prose, but it is poetic prose. In fact, so frequent is the iambic rhythm—a grave fault in prose considered as prose pure and simple—that one wonders why the play was not written actually in verse. Much of it, if spoken on the stage, would give the listening ear the fallacious sense of blank verse, with strange jolts when the rhythmic beat dwindled into prosaic step. But, this apart, the language is beautiful, atmospheric and dramatic. That it would need cutting for practical stage purposes is no condemnation. A book will bear a fuller text than a theatre always; Shakespeare himself, there is evidence to show, was acted in his own lifetime in versions cut from the printed or manuscript form. The prompt copy, from which, alas, so many of his plays were solely printed, is responsible for the brevity of a play like *Macbeth* by comparison with the fuller length of the final text of *Hamlet*.

In movement, *Salma* is richer than most poetic plays, and the close of each scene is deftly worked—at least so it appears in the reading, but the critic would be rash who could say what action would or would not "get over" without seeing a play in actual rehearsal. Very often a passage which reads intensely dramatically will in representation be bereft of even a thrill, just as sometimes a passage which does not especially hold a reader will grip an audience by the very throat. Actual stage experiment is the only test. So in criticising this aspect of Captain Cranmer-Byng's play it is only

possible, out of equal fairness both to reviewed and reviewer, to say that *Salma* has all the appearance of good dramatic movement.

In the characterisation of his play Captain Cranmer-Byng has not, except in two parts, attempted what may be called full-length portraiture. For the matter of that, no dramatist ever does attempt to do more than adequately sketch the subordinate persons in his drama. Salma herself and Abu'l Fath, however, are full-length portraits and must be judged as that. Shamsuddin is at best a kit-cat picture ; he is not so important a personality as he is a rôle, and consequently, so long as he fills his rôle successfully—which he does—it is not necessary to the plot that he should influence the action by his personality as against his mere position in the dramatic scheme of things. But Salma is a woman of individuality, and her personal outlook to some extent controls the story. This, in a dramatist, is a virtue. As a rule it is the story which controls the personal outlook of one's characters ! Salma has an allure that holds the reader, and the influence she has over the last scene—in which she does not actually appear—is well contrived and psychologically subtle. It is more, it is psychologically accurate. Salma's characterisation deserves ungrudging praise.

But it is Abu'l Fath who is the triumph of the play, and this figure is extraordinarily well suggested—a large-brained, large-hearted, benevolent and humorous rogue. The breath of the *Arabian Nights* is in him, tempered by a wind that surely blew past the door of the barber of Cervantes. Whenever Abu'l Fath is on the stage the play knows no flagging ; sometimes when he is absent it does, and that is his best tribute. This part would be the delight of a character actor, and would play exceedingly well.

In looking back on *Salma* as a whole one remembers mainly the coloured movement of it and its undercurrent of wild yet restrained feeling. It is this which makes one regret that it was written in prose. The *entr'acte* seems to clamour for actual verse-utterance. Beautiful and atmospheric as it is, I cannot help feeling that this part, if no other part, of the play should have had the benefit of direct lyrical rhythm, even, perhaps, of rhyme. It seems such a lost opportunity to have put so much beauty of lyrical feeling into prose. The play would produce well, for it is full of colour and subtle light and shade, heat and vivid intensity.

The two other books associated with *Salma* for the purposes of this review are both in blank verse, but, though in dialogue form, are not plays so much as dramatic poems ; consequently they have to be considered from a different standpoint.

Herodias Inconsolable, by Mary E. Boyle (Chelsea Publishing Co.),

is a duologue between Herod and Herodias after the death of Salome. It is built up out of the following passage from the Syriac Apocrypha, supposedly from a letter from Herod to Pilate in exile at Vienne: "For as my daughter, who was dear to me, was playing on a deep pond of water which was frozen over, the ice broke under her, and her whole body went down, and her head was cut off, and remained on the surface of the ice. And lo! Herodias is sitting inconsolable with the head in her lap." There is a certain morbidity in the idea of a protagonist in a poem supposedly speaking with her daughter's decapitated head on her lap, and it is akin to the morbidity behind *The Pot of Basil* by Keats. But it is only fair to say that there is no morbidity in this poem beyond its initial situation. The blank verse is at times on a high level, but its excellence is fitful and uncertain. Occasionally a modern, almost a colloquial, use of phrases brings in a jarring note, and the influence of Browning is sometimes too apparent. But there are passages that have music and imaginative feeling, and promise is here if the writer will learn one very necessary art—an art that many other poets even better than she might also usefully practice—the art of blue-pencilling. *Herodias Inconsolable* is far too long, especially as its theme is single and has no secondary issues.

Yosodhara, by Nellie B. Badcock (Chelsea Publishing Co.), is a series of five short scenes, depicting the situation of Gotama's wife after his desertion of her and her child in order to live the life of a hermit and evolve his message of light and love to the world. Finally she gives her son to be merged in Buddha's ruthless separation from mankind in the ardour of his mission. There is scope in this for more than Miss Badcock has attempted; the book, as a consequence, seems inadequate to its theme, not because it is badly written, but because its writer has done a water-colour when she ought to have painted in oils and upon a larger canvas. In its limits it is well done, with many touches of dramatic feeling. The verse, while not original in its march, is ordered and coloured and sometimes atmospheric. Occasionally it has so much of the right note that it seems a pity the theme was treated more episodically than fully. On the other hand, the last part of the last scene is not worthy of the emotion involved. The final parting of mother and son might have been developed—and intensified—to advantage. Its simplicity is on the right note, but not its intensity. Also—a minor point but, technically, of importance—the rhyme of "run" and "son" in the last line is a flaw. If spoken on the stage it would be very apparent; even on the printed page it is unpleasingly noticeable.

W. B. N.

WHAT IS POETRY?

"WHAT is Poetry?" The question has often been asked—by the critic, by the reader, but most of all, perhaps, by the unhappy minor poet, who, for all his soul's agony, can never produce that true poetry in which he longs to find expression. We (though by "we" I suppose I mean the "few of us" of Abt Vogler) know poetry when it is presented to us—and that is all we can say. It is of no use to say that the subject must not be trite or unworthy; it matters not that the song was sung in ancient Hellas five thousand years ago and has been sung by a thousand poets since—the poet, by this subtle essence of Poetry which is in him, transfuses the old subject with a new fire. Some little of this same essence, I think, Miss Morris has (*Moondreams*, by M. E. Morris: Erskine Macdonald, 2s. 6d.). She is one of those writers who, without achieving any particular felicities of either style or thought, nevertheless stands out, by virtue of the possession of the essence, from the minor writers amongst whom her lot has hitherto been cast. One cannot describe her work in any other way than to say simply, she is a poet. It is enough. Possibly she will never be a great poet, but I think that (if she is lucky) she will win a place, if but a small one, amongst those poets whose work is destined to last.

This book shows a careful and discriminating selection of both subject and treatment. If Miss Morris experiences an emotion she does not attempt to express it by babbling blatantly about it; such a treatment would, I am sure, revolt her with its vulgarity. Rather, as a poet should, she chooses with exquisite care a subject on which to write, fitting to the emotion. This may appear to be the same thing; in reality it expresses the difference between a pantomime song and an aria by Gounod; between the latest popular waltz and the "Moonlight Sonata"; between Mrs. Wilcox and Milton; between, in short, false and real Art. The subject once chosen, Miss Morris never allows her working on it to lapse into either bombast or sentimentality. This fastidiousness is seen at its best in the three sonnets, *To Helen Dead*, which have already appeared in the POETRY REVIEW

There are to-day a number of writers of minor verse who seek to disarm criticism and to excuse the inadequacy of their verse on the grounds that it is "for children." This is a most pernicious practice. I can understand and condone the desire to publish the products of one's pen; however poor they may be there are always a few people who will value them for personal association, but in the name of all the Muses let us be honest about it and refrain from insulting the intelligence of our children. Children are as capable of appreciating true poetry as are adults, if not more so, and true poetry must

always be the best words in the best order, whatever its content may be. If it is necessary to present children with specially simple verse or subjects (which I do not for a moment admit) there are writers such as Allingham, Stevenson, De la Mare and others who have written such poetry. This does not, of course, preclude the writing of other poetry of this sort, but the standard of excellence must be high; higher, indeed, than in ordinary poetry, for it has a special function to perform. And the one book which I should *not* give to a child in which I desired to inculcate a sound poetic taste is Miss Alice Colley's *Nature Songs for Children.*

It is always unsafe to say unkind things about Oxford's annual collection of minor verse (*Oxford Poetry*, 1922, Blackwell, 2s.), for there is no doubt that the Oxford poets are among the feeders of the main stream of English poetry, and the tone of *Oxford Poetry* to-day may possibly foreshadow the general trend of English versification a few years hence. Nevertheless, the temptation to an adverse criticism is always great, and the reviewer who would be just must always keep in mind the comparative youth of the writers.

There is a tendency in these anthologies for a particular style (one might almost call it a *leit motif*), to be constant throughout, so that each volume often resembles the work of a single poet in varying moods rather than an anthology. In the present volume the blatant crudity of a few years ago has disappeared, but with it has been sacrificed most of the rugged strength which was the redeeming feature of the earlier style. The characteristics of the book are a trivial prettiness and a highly artificial simplicity of style which would almost seem to foreshadow a new age of Alexandrianism. However, a few jewels amongst the gew-gaws leave us with some hope for the future, however little.

Up to the Hills, by C. A. Renshaw, compels us to assert that Miss Renshaw writes too much. Or perhaps (as I am told that no writer can write well without writing much) it would be kinder to say that she is not selective enough. Her influences are rather too obvious; musical jingle is not at all suitable to the rugged North Country which she strives to interpret, and phrases seem to have been lifted directly from various poets. When one sees the phrase, "God! I will pack," the mind insists on continuing

> ". . . and take the train
> And get me to England once again,"

whatever the rest of the verse may be. Other sayings there are, too, from the same poet, and *Grantchester*, *The Great Lover* and other poems are successfully paraphrased. And there are poems which are nothing at all but a medley of echoes. Nevertheless, when all

these defects are allowed for, there is still much fine poetry in the book, although the arrogant claim in the preface that " none has ever sung (Yorkshire's) charms with equal ardour, or found such living rhythms and fresh delighting words in which to praise them " is somewhat exaggerated. Miss Renshaw has neither the sombre strength of Mr. Gibson, the delicate folk-music of Mrs. Ratcliffe, nor the quiet, interpretative glamour of Mr. Childe, and the poems where she writes in long, jingling lines do not suggest Yorkshire in the least. When, however, as in *Thanksgiving* and *The Pull of the Earth*, she forgets that Mr. Noyes ever wrote, one begins to feel some of the moorland magic that we know the poet has felt. Miss Renshaw is at her best, however, when she is writing in the sonnet form, either singly or in sequence. She has a noble master, and when she does not imitate him goes far towards rivalling him. Such poems as *June*, *Resurrection*, *The Proof*, *Love of Life* and *Honeymoon Breakfast* are worthy to rank with almost any sonnets written to-day.

Mr. H. H. Abbott's book, *Black and White*, is well named, for the title suggests the varying quality of the verse. There is no doubt that the author is an extremely competent craftsman; indeed, the despairing reviewer, having read the book, is inclined to cry, " Why *does* he do it? "

> " Through the vast, phosphorescent square I pass
> Crowded with men and women, noisy, eager,
> That gesticulate and bargain for each other "

is not poetry (besides being shockingly ungrammatical). But we fancy it will be thought very clever, together with the psychological studies of cricketers and the lines entitled *Fact*; but they are not poetry. Besides these Mr. Abbott has pursued another phase of Modernism which is, if anything, still less to be commended; the " photographic " poem of country life which is seen at its best (and also at its worst) in Mr. Blunden and Mr. Drinkwater. Mr. Abbott adds no glory to a style which has need to be well used if used at all, and his verses are for the most part extremely tedious. But there are a few poems which really repay the patient searcher, poems in which cleverness is united to true poetic feeling; *Landscape*, for instance, where he describes how

" Across the fields are the arrowy tracks of the birds . . .
The whirr of a covey of partridge, russet survivors . . .
Filigree branches of trees on a coral sky . . .
A shadowy hare through the mist noiselessly . . . gliding . . . by . . ."

The song, *Spring is a Melody*, *Young Earth* and the title-poem are all very good, but perhaps the finest poem in the book, displaying both insight, poetic feeling and technical skill, is *The Call* :—

" Hoarse sirens bellow to the morning sky :
Stumbling into the factory's yawning mouth
God's workers go.

These do not hear the silver bugle sound
That Theseus sent along Athenian glade
One summer's morn ;
Nor Triton calling through the emerald ground
To long-tressed Nereids that had strayed
For lovers lorn.

These do not hear the clarion peal at Roncevaux
That hushed the exultant cries of infidel
For Roland slain ;
Nor catch the fairy piping dim and low
In proud Titania's grassy dell
And moonlit plain.

The black gates clash ; the wailing echoes die.
Once more begins the soul's long drouth,
Withering, slow. S. M.

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Messrs. T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., have published at 10s. 6d. net *Robert Browning : The Poet and the Man*, 1833–1846. On the cover the book is said to be by Francis M. Sim ; on the title page, Frances M. Sim. Internal evidence suggests that the latter is correct. The book purports to draw upon new material and to be a contribution to the literature of the subject. The only new thing we see in it is the suggestion that Browning was the author of the hymn, *Nearer My God to Thee*. Considering the exalted sentiments of this hymn and the circumstances of its publication, we can only regret that such an extraordinary claim, for which not a shred of real evidence is advanced, should have been made. In other respects, too, the book is disappointing. Fairly careful analyses of Browning's earlier poems are made, but these have all been done before, and the writer attempts no synthesis by which either " the Poet " or " the Man " might have been better understood. Unfortunately also grave faults in composition disfigure the work throughout. Misused pronouns, broken constructions, repetitions of words and phrases that remind one of the letters of Primus to his uncle in *My Lady Nicotine*, to say nothing of split infinitives, abound. The writer should have procured the help of some good literary adviser. There is a certain tenacity in a discussion of *Sordello* which prompts the thought that with such help the book might have been made a useful one.

TO THE EDITOR—A SELECTION OF OPEN LETTERS:

FOR AND AGAINST FREE VERSE.

IN considering the subject of Free Verse we must take into account that spirit of revolt which has claimed the world at intervals during the progress of the centuries, and the peculiar nature of this particular revolt which dreams of revolutionising the whole process of poetry.

We moderns, dazzled as we are by our own modernity, are apt to forget that every age has been modern in its time and that to-day's revolutionary utterances may be dogma to-morrow.

The present-time enthusiasm for poetry shows itself in a continual striving after, or rather clamour for, new modes of expression and original ideas. The war gave the cult a decided fillip ; the emotional stress and nervous tension ruling at that time produced impatience with the old manners and modes, and the desire to start with a perfectly clean sheet, in a perfectly new way and in a perfectly new world, led to a series of extravagances that have done much to damage the cause of free verse. Having failed to construct a new world it is scarcely a matter for wonder that we have failed to construct a satisfactory new poetry, for Art is an impressionable thing and takes its dress largely from the mood of the moment. Perhaps that is why a certain section of it was so spasmodic and feverish after the war years and is still in such a state of flux.

That we are striving after originality is certain, but what is not quite so obvious is the real significance of the word " originality " Of one thing we may be sure, it does not actually *necessitate* a change of form. The great poets have taken the old metres and transmuted them to a wonderful freshness, using them to their own ends with consummate skill. The conventional verse forms are as an instrument on which they have played a glorious symphony of their own imagining ; whether they would or would not have done better in an entirely new medium I am not competent to say, but the one thing that stands out to my mind is that we have applauded them because we have understood them. Would they have been so applauded, so understood, if they had played on some strange instrument of which people had never heard ? Would their appeal have been so great if their language had not been so universal ? Surely not ; change is incident to growth and we grow slowly. We are, rightly or wrongly, content to go on using the same language of poetry as we are content to go on using the English language—most of us have no desire to learn Esperanto.

The Verse Librists contend that rhyme and metre limit expression. It is true that they make the work of expression more difficult, but where would be the virtue of Art if there were nothing

to be overcome? As to limiting expression, here I do not agree; the poet delights in his difficulties and sings the more joyously for having surmounted them.

Poetry is symbolic of a certain elevated state of mind. It transmutes ordinary words into a transcendant form by means of cadence and rhythm, rhyme and metre. It is therefore suited to more intense, more lyrical states of feeling than prose.

Let us take the other side; the Imagists give their definition of Verse Libre as a "verse form based upon cadence," that is, the perfect balance of flow and rhythm. That there is rhythm not only in verse but in good prose, and even in speech under stress of emotion, all will admit, but this does not make poetry of prose and speech, although both may be poetic. And that is where, I think, free verse fails somewhat—it so easily becomes prose in inexperienced hands.

The real issue is convention, the acceptance of certain forms by usage.

In verse, rhythm follows certain patterns; interweaving with the sentence rhythm is the rhythm or beat of the line, and it is this endless variety of pattern, this constantly changing kaleidoscope, that gives metrical verse its infinite quality and charm. Free verse depends only upon the sentence rhythm or cadence, it recognises no other laws, it will have none of the restraint of rhyme. But rhyme is a constructive element giving cohesion and unity, it is also melodious; the ear is accustomed to its recurring music and comes to listen for it. This is especially true of lyric poetry. Still it is true that rhyme is not necessary, it is an ornamental adjunct; blank verse dispenses with it and relies entirely upon the beat of the line and the sentence rhythm; but blank verse is only suited to sonorous language and lofty subjects; lyric poetry adds grace to itself by its use of rhyme. Still it is certainly limiting in that its exigencies often necessitate a change of expression on the part of the poet.

Where I think the Imagists gain is in their avowed intention of clearness of presentation, achieved by the exact use of the exact word. That is, the word which conveys the most accurate impression. Of course this is all to the good and rather a change from the diffuseness that we have had from some poets in the past. It has one rather dangerous pitfall, however, and that is the danger of producing a series of perfectly bald statements.

All forward movements are good and the Free Verse movement is certainly a forward one. We should stagnate if we did not continually seek new forms of expression, but this does not mean that we must accept all new movements in their entirety. It is impossible to

change the whole course of poetry at a blow; the new language must be learnt and the ear must become accustomed to lack of rhyme and metre and relinquish some of its conservatism. We understand and appraise as far as possible, but there is always the problem of perspective. It is easier to judge the movements of the past; they are over and have fallen into their true place in history. It is not so easy with those of our own time, we are involved in them, carried along with them; we cannot stand a long way off to view them, they are under our noses. Thus it is that we find ourselves prejudiced; they are too near to us.

To many of us at present free verse seems too extreme, too revolutionary, and we are not very dependable critics because of our liking for tradition and our affection for old-established methods. However, out of the two extremes will probably emerge a middle course which will take what is good out of the new idea and yet remain faithful to the best of the old. Further than the immediate future we cannot look. Cataclysms have happened before this, and who knows but that sometime the old poetry may be swept aside and the new hold undisputed sway.

To conclude, the Free Verse movement is a symptom of an "aliveness" in the world of poetry and an honest desire to produce something individual and at the same time worth while. We must not underestimate it, it is a force, and we can safely leave it to stand or fall by public opinion.

ELSIE HARRIET RASPIN.

AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLGIRL'S CONFESSIONS.

AFTER reading a very interesting article on Matthew Arnold and Poetry in the School, I looked back to my own childhood, and realized with something of a shock that Poetry was hateful then. I sought for the reason. I spent most of my school days in the Old Kent Road, London, S.E. Nursery rhymes learnt in the infant department I remember still with a thrill of pleasure. But upon reaching the higher classes poetry became a number of meaningless words in rhyme, which we had to repeat and write out many times. Each piece usually had an element of tragedy or terror. I can clearly recall learning a poem called *A Phantom of Delight*—the word "phantom" being explained as "ghost." The teacher called upon a girl to recite the first verse; she failed to do so, in fact no one could, whereupon the lady lost her temper and set us to write the first two lines out fifty times:

> "She was a phantom of delight
> When first she gleamed upon my sight."

When at last we were set at liberty an indignation meeting was held, and a resolution passed to the effect that every girl should seize an opportunity to rag teacher with the word "Phantom." For a whole fortnight the grim rag continued; punishment was meted out, but every girl answered a question asked by teacher with the word "phantom"; my own chance occurred in the history lesson.

On another occasion we learned *The Ocean*, by Lord Byron, who was described as a man who hated men and loved Nature. The phrase "Oak Leviathans" occurs in this piece, and until recently was a mystery to me. No one knew the meaning of it, and we lacked confidence in our teacher to ask her.

Another time the whole fourth standard were ignorant of who the "present Poet Laureate" was, so we had to write out the fact that "Alfred Austin" had the honour. I myself owe that gentleman a grudge, as I have not seen anything of his writing even now! The only piece we took to wholeheartedly was a speech by Mark Antony in *Julius Cæsar*, commencing, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen." We all memorised it well, even reciting it with much enthusiasm outside school. Such things as *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, *Plymouth Bay*, *Inchcape Rock*, were surely unsuitable for girls. Why were we not taught pleasant pieces with nice endings? A recent incident comes to mind of my own little six-year-old daughter. It was Christmas time, and she was called upon to say the pieces she had learnt at school. All went well until "Little Miss Muffett" was reached, then, after informing us "Miss Muffett, she sat on a tuffett, eating her curds and whey," she went on, "The queen was in the parlour, eating bread and honey." She admitted that was not what she said at school, but on being pressed for an explanation replied, with a real childish shudder, "Ugh! I not like spiders, I likes queens and honey." We are only young once, and I think an effort should be made to instil pleasant sensations and memories into our minds.

R. PERRY.

A POET ON POETRY.

(Being a Brief Résumé of a Lecture by Mr. W. W. Gibson.)

RECENTLY I had the good fortune to be present at a most delightful and, to me, most illuminating lecture on Poetry, by Mr. Wilfred Wilson Gibson. It may be of interest to those who were not so fortunate as myself if I give a brief *résumé* of the address. I should like it to be understood at the outset that I am *not* quoting the lecture verbatim, neither am I employing, in every instance, the lecturer's exact words and phrases, as I took no notes

at the time. I rely, therefore, solely upon my memory, and shall endeavour to give as faithful a reproduction of the more salient points as possible.

"Poetry," remarked Mr. Gibson, "is the essence of that real life which everybody lives at some period of their existence. Journalism, and the kind of life we read about in the daily newspapers, is, after all, merely superficial, and is, alas, too prone to be taken by the majority for the real thing. Many people will say, no doubt, that they don't ever read poetry—that they get on very well without it!—but they cannot really, to be fully *alive*. It is no good at all, however, to read poetry for any reason on earth than for the love of it; to read it from a moral, intellectual or cultural point of view is absolutely useless."

In dealing with the poet in relation to his work, Mr. Gibson continued: "A poet may be a poet in spite of his learning, but never because of it; it is, in fact, probably much more of a hindrance to him than otherwise. He must be gifted with strong imagination and vision, which will enable him to see more clearly into the heart of things than his fellow men. He must have the faculty of endowing all he touches with a deep significance, and, above all, the power of expressing himself. Many people have the gift of imagination, but the gift of expression is given to few.

"As to the subject: You hear people talking of improper subjects for poetry. Let me tell you there is no improper subject, the Muse does not need a chaperone! (Laughter.) If a subject is really unsuitable the poet will know soon enough, as his inspiration will give out almost immediately; but he need never worry himself as to the choice of subject; the world is teeming with them. It is quite wrong, as a matter of fact, to say that the poet chooses the subject—he doesn't, the subject chooses him! As a general rule, I should advise you to keep off Nature, unless you are very experienced. Don't write about a sunset, for instance. For, unless you can bring something more than mere description to it, the chances are that your poem will be only an inferior copy of the reality. You all know the kind of verse a week-end in the country inspires! It may be very interesting as a reminder of the good time you had, to *you*—but it can have no possible interest to anyone else; besides, you must remember that whatever you write about, whether the subject be Nature or otherwise, it must be re-created in your imagination first. Personally, I generally prefer something that my imagination can beautify: *The Slag Heap*, for example." (Mr. Gibson then recited his poem, by way of illustration.)

"Now," continued the poet, "practically all my poems are the outcome of direct physical contact with life, and consist either of my own personal experiences or those of my friends; it is very rarely indeed that I meet anyone who cannot furnish me with a theme for a poem. But I do not merely make a bare statement of facts, and stick them down just as they occurred. On the contrary, I must re-live, or imagine, my own experience, or that of my friend, many times before it is ready to write out. A poem must mature in the subconscious mind, and take on the colour of the preceding and succeeding events of the poet's life, and, in fact, a part of his personality, before it is ripe for expression; and then it will be a part of the poet himself, and will bear his own personal touch. Sometimes, indeed, my poems cannot be written until many months after they have been experienced; and on very rare occasions a practically "ready-made" poem will come to me, which I am able to take down straight away, without altering a line. It has so matured in my subconscious mind that the words and phrases are strung together, and flow easily, though I am probably quite unaware of the subject myself."

After the lecture, Mr. Gibson came into the audience, and talked in a friendly way. In the course of conversation he told us that he never publishes any poem until at least a year after he has written it, also that he rejects quite six times the amount of the poetry he writes. This from one of our greatest "Moderns" is surely encouraging to all minor poets, and bears out the proverb that "Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains."

IRENE PETCH.

POETRY AND "MODERN POETRY"

A very free report of the debate, Miss Edith Sitwell *v.* Mr. Alfred Noyes, held at the London School of Economics on May 8th.

I

"I HAVE not come to abuse my predecessors," she said.
Then, fluttering her type-sheets with a nervous hand, she read

In effect as follows: "My school of poetry is in direct line
With Marlowe—no second-hand clothes-shop, nor new wine

In old bottles. It flies the flags of a new age,
The age of "heightened consciousness"—that message

Is enough, I hold, to turn new facets of beauty to view,
To increase "sense-perceptions" of an Irish stew . . .

New, something new! *That*, I think, is good for any school
To have as an end in view. The fool, the fool

Labours with fetters of metre and rhyme,
Cramping his vision to make his words chime

To some hackneyed tune! Will they see double—
The future ages? Two meanings for one, a God in a bubble?

Yes? . . . Then are they blesséd, thanks to our school,
And heightened consciousness . . . let that be the rule!"

* * * *

Miss Sitwell was acid and pointed of speech,
With the air of a prophet and the bite of a leech.

Acid is good in its place: it burns things . . .
Giving us oxides and etchings, Miss Sitwells and stings . . .

Bites . . . and a clever pot-pourri of impressions,
Sensations, gyrations, vibrations, penetrations,

Fashions and rations. But acid destroys curves,
Producing jaggedness, raggedness, haggardness, nerves,

Free verse, free words, critics and curds,
In a world full of love and the singing of birds!

* * * *

The applause was good: with much thumping of wood,
They thanked Miss Sitwell for being so rude!

II

There is a hidden life in things which moves
The primal man in you: it is the God he loves

To praise in the mute wonder of a look,
The sorrow of a star. Song flows in a brook

And *makes* it flow even more than gravity,
Indeed, what's gravity but song of Heaven's charity?

The great vision of poetry is simply a bar
Of Music linking a word from star to star!

As stars move to rhythm, so words in a poet's brain,
Because birth closes in death, his words are touched with pain.

That was the defence Mr. Noyes then made,
Quoting old masters, as he brightly surveyed

The field of Miss Sitwell's contention. Mr. Noyes
Looks a boxer by the width of his neck, but the exquisite poise

Of his style is more than you or I can command,
While his plea for old forms ought to raise the sand!

* * * *

The applause was great: with much thumping of wood,
They thanked Mr. Noyes for being so good!

III

Then Mr. Gosse rose to hold the scales even,
Saying, "All poetry is one under Heaven!"

Modern and ancient—there is no such thing!
Only good and bad poetry. The lark on the wing

Does not argue the point. He sings
And men listen for the joy he brings.

The idea! . . . If poets must quarrel,
Let them enter the ring, not ask for the laurel!

FREDOON KABRAJI.

* * * *

THE BARTLETT PRIZE

Fifty Dollars for a Sonnet on the Sea

TO mark the inception of the American Section of The Poetry Review, our American Editor offers fifty dollars in competition for a sonnet on that most English of subjects, the Sea—a subject, however, that since Swinburne's day has received curiously little attention from English verse.

MSS. must be received at the New York office of The Poetry Review (Mrs. Hunt Bartlett, 27, West 67th Street), not later than August 31st, the envelope identified by the words "Sea Sonnet" being written on the top left-hand corner. A Board of Adjudicators will assist our American Editor in making the awards in this as well as in any other general competitions that may develop from the enterprise and liberality of our American Editor and her associates, as well as in the restricted and inter-State competitions that may be announced later. As the MSS. submitted in competition cannot be returned, contributors should keep a copy of their poems.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

There are more good poems here than in the last competition, but none has stood out as a thing of perfectly flawless beauty. The money prize is divided equally between two poets who have "apprehended an old thing newly." We print them in alphabetical order:

HAVEN. By Vera I. Arlett.

I have come home at last; the port is still,
And evening winds foretell a deep, hushed night.
O, if you only knew how strong the will
That captained me, how faint and far the light!
Here, now at peace, I think of bitter seas,
With skies a hopeless black; mad winds that fled
Shrieking the storm's tormented ecstasies,
And darkened every light that lay ahead.
Yet lonely on my soul's long, level wave
The mornings rose, the yellow sunsets died;
And many were the un-named thoughts I gave
Into the soundless depth below that tide.
But now, the moorings of your peace hold fast,—
Most patient watcher, I am home at last.

The principal novel image is in the sestette, the octave functioning, in my view, as the necessary introduction. In the following, which is an example of a success rarely attending rhymed couplets, the climax comes in the last line, which contains so beautiful a thought that it almost makes the quality of the whole unequal:

HEAVEN? By E. Joyce Harrison.

You who still see the carpet of the night
Broidered with stars and interwoven with light,
Still see the delicate tracery of trees
Pencil a saffron sky, and worship these;
You think I fear to die as a child fears,
With secret dread and terror-shaken tears,
To trust in darkness the soft arms of sleep;
It is not thus I lie awake and weep.
Never to see the sunlit earth again!
To feel the sharp, sweet kisses of the rain!
I would die gladly, were I only wise
That there are windy ways in Paradise.
Not streets of gold, O God, not seas of glass!

I pray that Heaven has little lanes of grass.
The shuttered casements of my soul flung wide,
I would behold upon that other side
The lowly sweep of fronded fern, and see
Brown-feathered Angels, singing in a tree.

"Philomel," with a characteristic contribution, wins one of the six book prizes. It is so brief that we can insert it here :

CUCKOO-SONG.

I chant no hymn sublime
To outlive Time.
I only sing
Two notes on the wing
And goodbye—
What matter ? All Spring
's in a cuckoo's cry.

The other five are won by noble poems from Mary Alison (*Oblivion*), Alberta Vickridge (*The Pantheist*), Edyth Hinkley (*A Refusal*), Charles C. Mortimer (*From the North*), and Joan Warburg (*Had I one Shred*).

We commend *Bal Masqué*, by Cyril G. Taylor, *The Dream Lover*, by Edith M. Johnes, *Youth*, by Irene Petch, *The Ghost*, by Molly Harrison, who can evidently compete on equal terms with her elders, *The Widower*, by P. J. O'Connor Duffy, *Overchurch*, by John Ernest Simpson, *Passion and Tenderness*, by Phyllis Hastings, *Tir-na-nog*, by William MacDermott, *My Fingers through the Long, Thick Grass I Drew*, by Elsie Harriet Raspin, *Colour*, by Dora A. Pattinson, *June*, by Brian Woods, *A Sonnet*, by Dudley H. Anderson, *The Incomprehensible*, by John F. Cranston, and *Passing Your Doorway*, by J. M. Stuart-Young.

Of the manuscripts which for various reasons we have regarded as *hors concours*, those of Honor F. Leeke were again very delightful. We hope she is storing all her completed work ; it should be read by a wider public.

There is little space left for moralisation ; but it may be worth while to point out to all those competitors who return again and again to the Christian religion that the use of stock phrases which occur in hundreds of hymns is a serious handicap. If a competitor has actually felt the *Blessed Love Divine* he will not refer to it by that name. If he has not experienced it—well, it is always better to

write about the familiar. If someone would write a poem of religious experience in which a fresh presentment could be combined with a new apprehension, it would meet a crying need which is only dimly realised; it would be quoted from every pulpit in a dozen countries within six months. It is so easy to forget that the beauty of Truth is smothered by a cliché.

O. C. DE C. E.

NOTES: REPORTS: ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Poetry Society received its certificate of incorporation on June 18th, thus consummating and consolidating and securing permanency for the efforts of fourteen years.

The annual general meeting of the Poetry Society was held at the University of London on May 26th. The financial statement showed that the gross revenue had reached almost the record figure of the previous year, and the reserve credit balance had been maintained. THE POETRY REVIEW had been placed on a more equitable basis, which would eventually contribute a profit to the Society's funds. Although the revenue was still inadequate, economy of management enabled a substantial balance to be brought forward after discharging all liabilities. The financial statement was adopted, with thanks to the Treasurer for his personal devotion to the Society's interests. The Secretary's report, which was a record of progress and development, indicating the far-spread ramifications and influence of the Society, was adopted. Mr. W. F. Rawnsley, the senior councillor, was confirmed in the Presidency, and the Lady Maud Warrender elected to the General Council to fill the vacancy caused by the greatly deplored death of the Lady Katharine Stuart.

We have the privilege of including in this issue several original poems from American contributors, including a poem specially written for THE POETRY REVIEW by Angela Morgan, the author of many books and of the inspiring poem, *The Unknown Soldier*, written at the request of the National League of Pen Women as their memorial in honour of the unknown dead. It was read by Miss Morgan herself at the special ceremonies held in the Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington. As the *Literary Digest* has remarked: "Angela Morgan is a poet most radiantly alive: she writes with a

fiery enthusiasm which warms the hearts of her readers." Arthur Crew Inman is the author of *Bubbles of Gold* (Dutton), and Elizabeth Scollard is one of the most prolific contributors to newspapers, which in the United States make a feature of fine new verse.

In one week in June the newspapers noted the passing of two distinguished literary men who had been associated with the Poetry Society. Herbert Trench had the lesser notice, but he was the greater poet, somewhat aloof from and outside his more strenuous contemporaries and their energetic friendly paragraphers. And a greater influence than his published work has been his production of *The Blue Bird* and *Peter Pan*, which awoke the imagination and brought beauty into the lives of many thousands. Maurice Hewlett, from gallant Arthurian romance degenerated into amorous sentimentality, which affected the partizan epic of Hodge as well as his war-time osculatory verse.

The usual general premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued, and six books will be awarded to the "highly commended."

Not more than *two* poems may be submitted at the same time.

If criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. and a stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed. (If a more detailed postal criticism is desired, 5s. and a stamped addressed envelope should be sent.)

Entries must be either typewritten or written in ink on one side of the paper only, and contributors who are not members of the Poetry Society or registered postal subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW must enclose as a coupon the imprint ("Printed by," etc.) cut from the back page of the cover of the current issue.

All MSS. submitted for premium awards should be addressed to "The Premium Editor," and should reach this office *not later than* August 1st. Entries cannot be returned.

SHORTLANDS

This Centre is able to record a very successful year of progress, with the addition of several new members. Thirteen ordinary meetings have been held since September, covering a large range of subjects, and one public meeting, when the Lady Margaret Sackville kindly came down and read a paper on "The Appreciation of Poetry" and several of her own poems. The visit was greatly appreciated, and a very large audience filled the Parish Room on a

November day of somewhat unfavourable weather. There will be one more ordinary meeting on June 19th, but the climax of the Summer Session was a departure from the ordinary procedure, which took place on Saturday, June 2nd, when, by the kind hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Dykes, their beautiful grounds at S. Swithin's were thrown open to the members for a Garden Meeting, to which the members of the Beckenham Shakespeare Society were invited. Mrs. Leishman, the President, and four members who had been selected by vote, gave readings from Browning, Matthew Arnold and Kipling; and the Beckenham Society gave scenes from *Julius Cæsar*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* in a most finished and spirited manner. M. L. Duffield, Hon. Sec.

CHELSEA

On May 8th Mr. Edward Percy, the dramatist, who as well as his literary gifts is possessed of a very good delivery (which is all too rare amongst poets and literary men), read one of his shorter plays and one of his poems delightfully. He kept the audience thoroughly interested, and the time seemed all too short. On June 12th Mr. G. K. Chesterton spoke on "Poetry." Mr. Hugh Spender, the President, at whose house the Chelsea Centre meetings take place, quoted from Matthew Arnold's essay on *The Study of Poetry*, and Mr. Chesterton took that as the starting-point of a fascinating and characteristic address. There was a very crowded and enthusiastic audience. Mr. Herbert Swiers, in proposing a vote of thanks, recalled his enjoyment when acting in Mr. G. K. Chesterton's *Magic* at an amateur dramatic performance.

HAMPSTEAD

The elocutionary powers of the members of the Hampstead Centre were shown to great advantage in the excellent rendering of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* on May 15th.

The meetings for the remainder of the Session are as under :—

July 3rd : Members' Special Evening, under the direction of Miss Stanton.

July 17th : Old Ballads.

The meetings are held at 7.45 p.m. at Miss Julie Huntsman's Studios, 150, Finchley Road, N.W.3 These will be suspended as usual during the summer months, and will be resumed on September 29th, when an "At Home" will be held from 7.30 to 10 p.m., to which members and friends are cordially invited. Further information of the work of the Centre can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. F. Tilly, 32, Camden Square, N.W.1.

AN INDIAN DANCING-GIRL

DANCING-GIRL with pearl-decked plaits,
Hearts of princes captivates.
Draped in dress of gold and rose;
Long-lashed eye-lids half a-close;
Henna-red her finger-tips;
Passion-red her tempting lips;
Ankles tied with silver-bells;
Youthful tide her bosom swells . . .
Tinkle . . . tinkle,
Smilingly . . .
Eyes a-twinkle,
Dances she.

Fairy-like she glides about;
Spreads her frilly rose-frock out;
Slips the shawl a-down her face,
Proudly steps with rhythmic grace,
Thrills the throng with side-long glance . . .
While performing peacock-dance
Softly beat her feet the ground
To the " Bin's " entrancing sound . . .
Tinkle . . . tinkle,
Charmingly . . .
Eyes a-twinkle,
Dances she.

Hearts and lips their homage pay,
Treasures at her feet they lay;
Glittering coins, ovations sweet
Till she moves again her feet.
Like an idol, fair and proud,
Worshipped by a doating crowd;—
" Beauty," leading thirsting eyes,
Down to hell . . . or up to skies. . . .
Tinkle . . . tinkle,
Coaxingly . . .
Eyes a-twinkle,
Dances she.

ELSA KAZI.

Khairpur Mirs.

The Poetry Society in Kensington will close the present season on July 5th with an address by Sir Nevile Wilkinson, at 9 Melbury Road, W.; resuming meetings on October 4th.

Successful candidates in the examinations of the Poetry Society :—

November 11th, 1922, at the University of London.

Certificates—Juniors (Special Mention): *Esther Rosenberg, *Rose Mishkin, Katie Nieman, *M. J. Reeves Hutchinson, *Jessie Walsh, *Nancy Dugon, Peggy Knight. (Passes): Rose Shapiro, Rose Mintz, Evelyn Antrich, Freda Barratt, Elsie Hodge, Doris Himmel, Thelma Carman, Jane Prentice, Laura Tanner, Elyrick Howard, Dorothy Rowling, Irene Barnes, Ethel Baker, Mabel Reeves, Carmen Glover, Evelyn Spurway, Doris Mitchell, Muriel Kimber, Alice Deighton, Betty Rowland, Montague Everitt.

Seniors (Special Mention): Nancy Grandy, Doris Cutler, Viola Cuvelier. (Passes): *Mary K. Danielli, Kathleen Benn, *Grace Wagstaffe, May Orton, Elaine Shanks, *Edith E. Courtauld, *Margaret E. Gaunt, Dorothy Violet Laws, Dorothy Everitt.

Adults (Honours): *Gladys E. London. (Passes): Kathleen V. W. Parken, Kathleen E. Stafford.

Bronze Medals—Juniors (Special Mention): Josephine Freedman, Monica Brett, Peggy Van Praagh. (Passes): Becky Marks, Johanna Hayes, M. Burton-Brown, Katreen Lack, Joyce Brown, Gwennie Commins, Helen Mary Wilkinson, Vivian Shanks, Joan Smith.

Seniors (Passes): Annette Walker, Vera Hopkins, Evelyn Gray, Winifred Stallworthy, Erica Priest.

Adults (Honours): Ivy Mitchell, Daisy Phyllis Wood. (Passes): E. H. Rogers, Gladys Braimbridge.

Silver Medals—Seniors (Special Mention): Evelyn Russell. (Pass): Celia Shanowitz.

Adults (Special Mention): Daisy J. C. Connor, Helen C. Watson.

March 10th, 1923, at the University of London.

Certificates—Juniors (Honours): *Polly Adler, *Muriel Mollison, *Sophie Spitalnik, *Marjorie Hobbs, *Edward Buckwell. (Special Mention): Dorothy Maier, Lily Finkelstein, Nellie Barratt, Elsie Deighton, Phyllis Hurburgh, Muriel Ridler. (Passes): Julia Jonas, Milicent Spisman, Lily Chipping, Lily Emmanuel, Bessie Isaacs, Vera Okines, Winifred Chamberlain, Vera Strong, Lily Thompson, Connie Robins, Lily Harrison, Doris Parker, Marjorie Crabbe, Hilda Brown, Marjorie Hazell, Elsie Lewis, Betty Bloek, Muriel Lingham, Francis Noove, Sarah Levy, Gwendoline Jones, Reginald Frith, Tommy Wood, Doris Tyler.

Seniors (Honours): *Doris Baxter, *Jessie Tandy, *Helen Betty Millett, *Dorothy Wernick. (Special Mention): Blanche Ottaway. (Passes): Nancie Napier White, May Hodge, Queenie Chambers, Beryl Nelson.

Adults (Honours): *Margot Isaacs, *G. M. Meek. (Special Mention): Eileen Kathleen Meller. (Pass): Muriel Newton.

Bronze Medals—Juniors (Special Mention): Jessie Walsh. (Passes): Janet Prentice, Marjorie Holland, Freda Barrett, Evelyn Spurway, Carmen Glover, Laura Tanner, Dorothy Rowling, Thelma Carman.

Seniors (Passes): Phyllis Halls, Stella Machin, Viola Cuvelier.

Adult (Pass): Kathleen V. W. Parker.

Silver Medals—Juniors (Passes): W. J. Reeves-Hutchinson, Phyllis Waugh, Vera Foote, Iris Loring.

Senior (Pass): Vera Hopkins.

Adults (Honours): Gladys E. London. (Passes): Gladys Braimbridge, Phyllis Wood.

June 9th, 1923, at the University of London.

Certificates—Juniors (Honours): Rose Blatt, Olive Dance, Ethel Butcher, Sylvia Popoli, Iris St.John, Rose Levy, Anna Hasselstrom. (Special Mention): Dorothy Blackwell, Gladys Bristowe, Kate Needle. (Passes): Doris Tanner, Hetty Stern, Miriam Kershner, Myrtle Capper, Irene Dunham, Rose Morrice, Ivy O'Driscoll.

Seniors (Honours): Isabella Mitchell, M. J. Reeves Hutchinson, Olive Ward. (Special Mention): Esther Simon, Lily Burley. (Passes): Winifred Blanche Smith, Marjorie Browning, Alice Pankhurst.

Bronze Medals—Juniors (Honours): Bessie Isaacs, Muriel Ridler. (Passes): Lily Emmanuel, Irene Pithers, Constance Robins, Elsie Hodge, Nellie Barrett, Doris Tyrer, Marjorie Hazell.

Seniors (Honours): Sybil Faye, Cora Wilcocks. (Special Mention): Jessie Tandy. (Passes): Blanche Ottaway, Margaret Gammage, Vera Okines, Myra McDonald, Beryl C. Nelson, Eva Balls.

Adults (Special Mention): C. McIntyre, Margaret Hamilton. (Pass): Mina B. Pound.

Silver Medals—Juniors (Passes): Jessie Walsh, Margaret Burton-Brown, Joyce Brown, Carmen Glover.

Seniors (Special Mention): Peggy Thompson. (Pass): Doris Baxter.

Adults (Special Mention): Kathleen V. W. Parker. (Passes): Ivy Mitchell, Gwyneth Milburn, Margot Isaacs, Doris Whiteaker.

October 28th, 1922, at Bromley.

Certificates—Juniors (Special Mention): Sylvia West. (Pass): Hazel Fordham.

Seniors (Special Mention): Barbara Wilkins, Audrey Foster, *D. Henley, *Joan Prechtel, *M. Weller, *Marguerite Young. (Passes): Kathleen Fowler, Rosemary Knowles, Betty Anderson.

Adults (Special Mention): *Madge Henley, K. Munday. (Passes): A. Sidney, Olive R. Wells, M. Yelverton.

Bronze Medals—Junior (Pass): G. Forsdike.

Adult (Special Mention): Catherine Low.

November 17th, 1922, at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Certificates—Juniors (Special Mention): Alice Humphrey, Rebecca Watson, Evelyn Reed, Edith Davidson. (Passes): Norman Darling, Ettie Sholton, Dora Milburn, Eleanor Hancock, Hilda Stobbs, Ivy Simpson.

Seniors (Pass): Catherine Dobson.

Adults (Honours): *Eleanor H. Best, *Margaret Pillar. (Special Mention): Gladys Brown. (Passes): Rhena Porter, Mary Fitzpatrick, Blanche Walton, Enid W. Gibson.

November 18th, 1922, at Stockton-on-Tees.

Certificates—Juniors (Honours): *Winifred Sergeant. (Special Mention): Jennie Roberts, Dorothy Kitching. (Passes): Joan Glover, Margaret Watson, Joan Hird, Marjory Billinghall, Brenda Marshall, Elsa Coldray, Kathleen Bjorck, Margaret Barker, Edith Hodgeson.

Seniors (Passes): Winifred Fletcher, Nancy Robson.

Adults (Special Mention): Alfreda Corbett, Norah White. (Pass): Muriel Fletcher.

March 28th, 1923, St. Helen's School, Northwood.

Certificates—Juniors (Passes): Silva Morris, Peggy Filgate, Gloria Terry.

Seniors (Honours): *Margaret Graham Pole, *Kathleen Brown-Allison. (Special Mention): Gwen Merrick, Margaret Gammage, Myra MacDonald. (Passes): May Witherick, Hetty Doubleday, Phyllis Burrows.

Bronze Medals—Junior (Pass): Agnes Clark.

Seniors (Honours): Barbara Davy. (Passes): Nancy Grandy, Peggy Thompson.

April 10th, 1923, at Sheffield.

Certificates—Juniors (Honours): *Everline Joan Sugg. (Passes): Joyce E. Fletcher, Irene May Newman, Mavis Cotterill Rowson, Phyllis E. Tucker.

Seniors (Honours): Alice Winifred Dobson, *Audrey M. Hodgson, *Thora Jones. (Special Mention): Zena Fairbotham, *Marjorie Holder. (Passes): *Eileen Bates, Maimie Wilkinson, Joyce Williams, Mary Walton, Marjorie Boswell.

Adults (Honours): *Hilda Rowbottom, Gertrude Dumberline. (Special Mention): *W. H. Bowmer, *Winifred Hodkin, *Doris Knight, *Ida Meakin, *Lilian Ogden, *Ida Robinson, *Lucie Douglas. (Passes): Dorothea Hodds, Edith M. Johnson, Elsie Willoughby, Jessie Armstrong.

Bronze Medals—Adults (Special Mention): Mabel Baker, Daisy Simpson.

* Recommended for the Bronze Medal without further examination.

ROBERT BROWNING: ARTIST AND PROPHET

READERS of Browning may be divided, for the most part, into two schools, one of which reveres him as a teacher, or prophet, but often fails to appreciate the poetic forms in which he wrote, while the other admires him as an artist, and regards the suggestion that he had a message to deliver as misleading.

The late Professor Sir Henry Jones, in his delightful volume, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, may be taken as the best representative of the first, the Didactic School. "What I shall seek in the poet's writings," he says, "is not beauty, but truth; and although truth is beautiful, and beauty is truth, still the poetic and philosophical interpretation of life are not to be confused" (p. 15). And what he seeks he finds—sometimes, it must be confessed, rather by lifting lines out of their context than by a consideration of the whole scope of a poem.*

The Artistic School is far more numerously represented in the modern literary world. Mr. William Sharp (*Life of Robert Browning*, pp. 209–10) says of Browning's work: "The question is not one of weighty message, but of artistic presentation." Mrs. Sutherland Orr (*Handbook to Browning's Works*, p. 2) appears to think that if any personal creed can really be found in Browning's poetry, we must by that discovery lower him in the scale of artistic value. The same position is strongly asserted in the late John T. Nettleship's *Robert Browning: Essays and Thoughts*. "Browning was one," he tells us, "to whom, for the purpose of his art, morality and immorality, right and wrong, were of equal value" (p. 290).†

* *E.g.*, in exhibiting Browning's optimism in *Fifine* (p. 126), where he fails to reckon with the final entanglement of the hero in Fifine's carnal charms.

† See also the whole almost violent essay *On Erroneous Study of Browning*, pp. 326–338.

Neither the Didactic nor the Artistic School of Browning students would seem to succeed in seeing the poet whole. The mistake of each lies in the assumption of a lack of relation between religion and art. Both are too departmental, although of the two the present writer would rather sin with Sir Henry Jones than with John T. Nettleship.

It is only fair, however, to refer the matter to the poet himself, and in doing so we are confronted with a good deal of evidence for the artistic position. In the preface to the edition of 1868, Browning speaks of his poems as "always dramatic in principle and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine."

Again, in *At the Mermaid*, he writes:

> Which of you did I enable
> Once to slip inside my breast,
> There to catalogue and label
> What I like least, what love best?

He is still more explicit in *House:*

> Shall I sonnet-sing you about myself?
> Do I live in a house you would like to see?
> Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf?
> "Unlock my heart with a sonnet-key?"*
>
> Invite the world, as my betters have done?
> "Take notice, this building remains on view,
> Its suites of reception every one,
> Its private apartment and bedroom too;
>
> For a ticket, apply to the Publisher."
> No: thanking the public, I must decline.
> A peep through my window, if folk prefer;
> But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine!

Of course, we are bound to respect Browning's judgment concerning his own purposes, but what if his collected works disclose certain recurrent ideas? May not these, if they deal with the higher life of Man, constitute a message without the poet's conscious intention?

* The allusion is to Wordsworth's remark that Shakespere revealed himself in his sonnets.

There are three or four such ideas in Browning, which are of the greatest religious significance.

1. There is, first, a strongly asserted individualism which continually addresses, almost assaults, the reader. It might be summed up in Newman's well-known confession of his early piety, "the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator." Thus in *Sordello* we read:

> Forget
> Vain ordinances, I have one appeal—
> I feel, am what I feel, know what I feel;
> So much is truth to me.

The same spirit appears in *A Bean-stripe:*

> I know my own appointed patch i' the world,
> What pleasures me or pains there; all outside—
> How he, she, it and even thou, son, live,
> Are pleased or pained, is past conjecture, once
> I pry beneath the semblance—all that's fit,
> To practise with—reach where the fact may lie
> Fathom-deep lower.

Again, in *Francis Furini*, he writes:

> I profess
> To know just one fact—my self-consciousness—
> 'Twixt ignorance and ignorance enisled—
> . . . . .
> how you fare
> Caught in the whirlpool—that's the Cause's care,
> Strong, wise, good—this I know at any rate
> In my own self—but how may operate
> With you—strength, wisdom, goodness—
> no least blink
> Of knowledge breaks the darkness round me.

Forty-seven years lie between the first and last of these quotations. The poet's whole life-work was pitched in this key of "enisled" individualism. The heroism of the epilogue to *Asolando* is based here. It is Browning himself without a doubt, child of that strenuous nineteenth century,

which, on a lower level, begat Samuel Smiles with his gospel of self-help, and which, in Browning's case, found a characteristic group-expression in York Street Independent Chapel, where the poet was baptized and taught the way of salvation, according to the most individualistic of Protestant churches.

2. It is even more striking to observe how, long before the Oxford Movement, the gist of sacramental thinking was already in our poet's mind. This it was that redeemed his individualism from gaucherie. He rejoices in the world, but less for itself than as the food of the soul. From this springs his essentially Christian valuation of the flesh. Take the following passage :

> You can believe
> Sordello foremost in the regal class
> Nature has broadly severed from her mass
> Of men, and framed for pleasure, as she frames
> Some happy lands, that have luxurious names,
> For loose fertility ; a footfall there
> Suffices to upturn to the warm air
> Half germinating spices ; mere decay
> Produces richer life ; and day by day
> New pollen on the lily-petal grows,
> And still more labyrinthine buds the rose.
> You recognise at once the finer dress
> Of flesh that amply lets in loveliness
> At eye and ear, while round the rest is furled
> (As though she would not trust them with her world)
> A veil that shows a sky not near so blue,
> And lets but half the sun look fervid through.
>
> . . . . . Up and down
> Runs arrowy fire, while earthly forms combine
> To throb the secret forth ; a touch divine—
> And the scaled eyeball owns the mystic rod ;
> Visibly through his garden walketh God.

Here is that fruitful conception of the body-soul which is based upon the Incarnation, the idea of a being that feels all Nature around to be sacramental and charged with love and beauty. This again is characteristic of Browning.

Whether he is portraying an Italian troubadour as in *Sordello*, a Jewish scholar as in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, or a modern Nonconformist thinker as in *Easter Day*, he makes conspicuous this idea of the interplay of body and soul as the highest type of human life. May we not believe, then, that in this conception, so constantly recurrent, we have a living conception of the poet himself ?

3. Above all, as we survey the whole wonderful range of his subjects, there rises the majestic vision of God as an Infinite purpose of good to human souls. Never in all the history of poetry has the Christian conception, "God is Love," received so magnificent a setting. From *Pauline* to *Asolando* that thought dominates his writing. Browning was only twenty when he sang :

> So when spring comes
> With sunshine again like an old smile,
> And the fresh waters and awakened birds
> And budding woods await us, I shall be
> Prepared, and we will question life once more,
> Till its old sense shall come renewed by change,
> Like some clear thought which harsh words veiled before ;
> Feeling God loves us, and that all which errs
> Is but a dream which death will dissipate.

Is that only the utterance of an imaginary character ? Is Browning himself not in it ? Let us look at his later work. He was fifty-one years old when he published *A Death in the Desert*, and this strikes the same note as *Pauline*, and as does, indeed, so much else of his intervening writing :

> For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
> And hope and fear—believe the aged friend—
> Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
> How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

Finally, *Asolando*, published on the day of his death, though it closes with the old individualistic fighting note, has this as its penultimate, this thought that makes the struggle worth while :

Then life is—to wake not sleep,
  Rise and not rest, but press
From earth's level where blindly creep
  Things perfected, more or less,
To the heaven's height, far and steep,

Where, amid what strifes and storms
  May wait the adventurous quest,
Power is Love—transports, transforms
  Who aspired from worst to best,
Sought the soul's world, spurned the worms'.

I have faith such end shall be :
  From the first, Power was—I knew.
Life has made clear to me
  That, strive but for closer view,
Love were as plain to see.

When see ? When there dawns a day,
  If not on the homely earth,
Then yonder, worlds away,
  Where the strange and new have birth
And Power comes full in play.

It is this conception of the Divine Love as coextensive with the Divine Power which is the source of that strong optimism beating exultingly upon us from so many of his poems ; and when a dramatist through so large an assemblage of *dramatis personæ* chants the same victorious note of rejoicing in the Divine Love, are we really to believe that " for the purpose of his art, morality and immorality, right and wrong, are of equal value " ?

II

I claim, then, that a case has been made out—and it might have been far more abundantly illustrated—for an interpretation of Browning in terms of Prophecy, using that word in its Hebrew sense of a man's speech for God. I desire, in the second place, to suggest Browning's religious value *on the ground of his artistic achievement.*

This involves the whole question of the relation of Art

to Life. Here one encounters a good deal of loose thinking in the Artistic School. This, for instance, is representative of a large number of modern minds: "He looked at all things," says Miss Edith Sichel of Canon Ainger (*Life of Ainger*, p. 345)—"art, science, literature—through moral spectacles, and this tendency was bound to injure thought." Moral spectacles! So we have come to them! Morality something extraneous to our real self! What psychology is this? Surely any morality which does not pervade one's whole being is half-sister to hypocrisy. But, indeed, one cannot divide personality into water-tight compartments. And in outlook upon life a man sees as he himself is. Nothing appears to him uncoloured by his own quality. The vision of the artist, therefore, and its expression, whether in words, or in colours, in wood or marble, will always be charged, subtly if not manifestly, with whatever good or evil exists in himself. Art may be either moral or immoral; it can never be un-moral.

Nor is it of any use to burke the fact that the Christian religion involves a philosophy of the Universe. A man brought up in its atmosphere, guided by its sanctions, saturated with its spirit—and Browning was all this—inevitably sees Nature, not as an agglomeration of material things, but as instinct with the Divine. And for him, Spirit, as Professor Pringle Pattison has nobly said, is the *terminus ad quem* of Nature (*The Idea of God*, p. 200). It will follow that without religion he can never exhibit Nature as Nature actually is; nor, unless the Christian religion is fundamentally a delusion, can anyone else.

What is true, however, in the objections of the non-moral school of Art is that, whenever a poet consciously sets out to present a thesis, or an argument, he tends towards a world of abstractions, and Art is concerned not with abstractions, but with life. There can be no doubt that here we do touch the spot where Browning sometimes failed. Much of his later work is clever, but there is no reason why some of it should not have been written in prose. That is its condemnation as poetry. As Professor Bosanquet says: "Poetry no more keeps its meaning when turned into corre-

sponding prose, than a picture or sonata keeps its meaning in the little analyses they print in the catalogues or programmes " (*Lectures on Aesthetic*, p. 66).

But it is one thing to rule out of the realm of Poetry a thesis in verse form, and another to assert that the unfolding of personal convictions is incompatible with the highest Art. I suggest that any ideas which concern supreme realities must find their best expression in poetry and nowhere else.

There are two aspects of poetry which justify this position, the technical and the symbolic, and according as we can affirm greatness of any poet in respect to either, we may rightfully claim him as an exponent of the Divine.

First, there is in poetry a certain technique, and the line which will not scan is not verse. The poet has to work within a definite scheme of syllables. Whatever the metre may be, it must have the varying tone-lengths arranged in mutual correspondence, as the varying lengths of the ether waves give the several colours of light. All beauty is born thus, from the opposition and reconciliation of parts ; and without beauty in the ordering of words, poetry cannot be. Even in verse consciously grotesque, as some of Browning's is, a basal harmony must lie hidden, else were it false to the grotesque in Nature, which is ever grotesque in the relation of parts, but entirely beautiful in their separation. But why is it that rhythm produces in us the pleasure of the beautiful ? Why is it that even the rhythm of my walking in step with my friend reduces the fatigue I should otherwise feel ? Is it not just because rhythm is the working of a law, to which not only my body but everything else in the universe makes response ? Most true is Dryden's glorious verse :

> From harmony, from heavenly harmony
> This universal frame began
> From harmony to harmony,
> Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
> The diapason closing full in Man.

Before measuring the significance of this cosmic quality

in poetic technique let us consider the other aspect of poetry—the symbolic.

Now it is possible to achieve the form of poetry with fatal completeness, for, on the face of things, to work within a definite poetic form tends to limit the utterance of truth. It would appear unlikely that the truth of any matter can exactly fit an expression determined by the length and number of syllables. Accordingly the poem in which Truth is trim may please for a moment, but is too much like conjuring to impress our deeper judgment. Thus the limitation of utterance involved in poetic form requires compensation in some suggestion of reserve or of the unrevealed. Your true poet is ever aware of the possibilities and value of such suggestion. For him every least thing has the Infinite as its basis and its background. The whole universe looks out from the eyes of a little child. And it is the supreme task of the poet to combine ordered expression with hints of the unspoken. Here it is true that if speech is silvern, silence is golden. The wealth to be utilised is so vast. For every word has its hinterland of associated ideas, and the words of our greatest poems are not so much coins of an accepted value, as stars moving in their courses, with aspects that vary with our moods, and with shadows cast upon other orbits than their own. Or to express the Ideal of Poetry under closer imagery, one is reminded of Chaucer's legend of St. Cecile in *The Second Nun's Tale*, the Saint whose head the angels crowned with invisible roses and lilies, so that rich odours filled all the place where she was. And this Saint, who was patroness of Music, may well stand for Poetry too. The noblest verse has a form all men may measure, but also a crown of fragrances which escape our sight and breathe themselves out into the last reaches of the mind.

Browning himself expresses this suggestion of reserve in *Sordello:*

> Note,
> In just such songs as Eglamor (say) wrote
> With heart and soul and strength, for he believed
> Himself achieving all to be achieved

By singer—in such songs you find alone
Completeness, judge the song and singer one,
And either purpose answered, his in it
Or it's in him : while from true works . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . escapes there still
Some proof, the singer's proper life was 'neath
The life his song exhibits, this a sheath
To that ; a passion and a knowledge far
Transcending these, majestic as they are,
Smouldered.

The song and the life are congruous, but the life is deeper than the song. That is the burden, too, of his *Andrea del Sarto (called the Faultless Painter) :*

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or, what's a heaven for ?

This points us on to the final objective of Art. Take the following from *Fifine :*

. . . Art—which I may style the love of loving, rage
Of knowing, seeing, feeling the absolute truth of things
For truth's sake, whole and sole, not any good truth brings
The knower, seer, feeler, beside—instinctive Art
Must fumble for the whole, once fixing on a part
However poor, surpass the fragment, and aspire
To reconstruct thereby the ultimate entire.

Now, what is that " ultimate entire " if it be not God ? So all great Art is fundamentally mystical, mysticism being the immediate access of the soul to God. And is not this quality the secret of the poet's appeal to us ? And this being so, can Art ever be without its message ?

The human heart responds to melody, especially when mystery enspheres it. Music and Poetry disturb us emotionally, sometimes to tears, often to moral cleansing, just because beauty of form, when linked to man's awareness of the inaudible and invisible beauty behind all our mental measures, reminds us of our spiritual kinship with the Alone-Perfect and the Infinite, quickening in us by contrast the

sense of our own imperfection. If that is not what is meant by "message" we can never receive one. The elaboration of it may belong to some other office. But the song endures because built on that human heart, which moves with the movements of the hidden God. It follows that, while the subject-matter of Poetry may be, indeed, anything one likes, the highest things are precisely those which are most suitable for poetic treatment. Now it is in his handling of such subjects Browning achieves his best technical work. His technique is nearly always of a high order. "Browning," says Professor Saintsbury, "was never an incorrect prosodist; even his rhymes, though frequently extravagant, are almost always defensible, and it is a vulgar error to think him even rough in verse though he was so in diction" (*Historical Manual of English Prosody*, p. 212, *cf.* also p. 299). But it is precisely when he is lifting our thoughts to the Divine Goodness that his music is finest. In other words, when he is a prophet he is most an artist. A hundred passages leap to one's mind in this connection. What a lift there is in metrical efficiency and melody when in *Abt Vogler* we come to the stanza beginning:

> Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee,
> the Ineffable Name?

What perfect music there is in *Wanting is—what?* with its mystic appeal! Reading Browning's poems aloud is often heavy going until one comes to those places in which God is most evident. Then the prosody perfects itself. For those who know by experience what the Christian religion is there is nothing surprising in this. Perhaps with deeper meaning than Keats intended they can say:

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

A. D. MARTIN.

THE SONG OF THE PLOUGH.

I AM the precursor of God,
The earth divides at my blade.
Upturned by me, beneath each sod,
The seed of the soul is laid.

The earth divides at my blade ;
Like water the furrows roll,
By my bright steel the bed is made
For the delivering of the soul.

Upturned by me, beneath each sod
I set life's purpose free ;
The deep impenetrable will of God
Is bared to sight by me.

The seed of the soul is laid ;
The warm wind lends it breath ;
I am the implement God made
To out-root the weed of death.

E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

POETRY

NEVER dread a silence for your ears,
Never fear the stillness on your hands,
And never mourn the soundlessness of tears,
Nor shrink away from weirdly quiet sands.

Since the first poet spoke, silence has sound ;
The silence of all hurt and lovely things
Has wakened into speech, is caught and wound
With music in the song the singer sings.

Then hear, where he has voice, all silence break :
Silence of ecstasy, silence of grief ;
Hear silence of the oak whose branches shake
Into the grass the acorn and the leaf.

HAZEL HALL.

A BRIEF SURVEY OF CANADIAN POETRY

CANADIAN poetry is naturally of somewhat recent origin. The country, up to the time of confederation, was of comparatively slow growth. Little more than half a century ago it was a land of forest and plain, and the upbuilding of its present civilisation was achieved in the sweat of the brow. Long days of exertion with axe or plough or rifle were more conducive to wholesome slumber than to burning oil (which cost money) in dreamy attempts to reach the heights of poetic fame. The backache produced by milking and baking and washing did not encourage rhymed eulogia on the glories of motherhood. With the country's rapid development in recent years the spirit of song awoke and, though Canada has produced no Longfellows or Whittiers or Whitmans, like the great republic to the south, which had the advantage of older establishment and the cultured influence of literary schools like Harvard and Yale, Canadian poets of to-day are holding their own fairly well with contemporary writers in the United States. It would be obviously unfair to compare them with Kipling, Newbolt, Masefield, Hardy, Noyes or Gibson; but they are gaining daily in strength, breadth and vision.

The term "Canadian poets" must be taken to mean natives of the Dominion, or those whose length of residence in the country has practically made them Canadian in thought and outlook. I shall make no reference to a certain class of versifiers who, having migrated to Canada in early manhood, and having dabbled in indifferent rhyme in their own countries, entered the literary arena of the new land with an attitude of lofty criticism towards native writers; an attitude which causes a good deal of resentment, because the vigorous Canadian has a healthy objection to patronage in any form. There are several

of these gentlemen whose published writings often show painstaking correctness in classical form and metre, but a deplorable lack of the main essential of all poetry—inspiration. Had they remained at home it is quite safe to assume that they would never have been heard of, while, in Canada, they merely cumber the market and are in no wise representative of the spirit of the country of their adoption.

Canada, great and beautiful and interesting as she is, nevertheless is not prolific in poetic themes, excepting along certain well-trodden lines, which have been done to death. Her history from coast to coast holds something of that monotony which is inevitable in a land where all the people have for years been pursuing the selfsame object. Like wine, she needs maturing. The vintage is good, but age is necessary to bring it to its full perfection. The stories of the struggles of the early settlers, the romance of old Quebec, the salt breezes of her sea-coasts and the glories of her broad rivers and pathless woods, constitute the sum total of her subjects, but they are becoming hackneyed with too much usage. Hence Canadians of the present day are apt to look away from their own country for inspiration. There is, however, a greater handicap on native work, and that is the absence of frank and unbiassed criticism. It is the unfortunate custom of Canadian journals to cloak the failings and cover with unctuous praise the writings of their fellow-countrymen, lest by honest criticism they be accused of a lack of national spirit. Commendable as this may possibly be from a patriotic viewpoint, it works to the detriment of literature in actual practice; because it leaves the less educated of the reading public in ignorance of what is, and what is not, *real* poetry, and impresses the ambitious warbler himself with the idea that his feeble chirps outrival the nightingale's song. Unpalatable as the truth often is, it is unquestionably a useful tonic. A few fearless critics would weed out a good deal of worthless publication.

Canadian verse is at its best in Nature Poetry, in illustration of which I may cite such names as Archibald Lamp-

man, Bliss Carman, Wilfred Campbell and Chas. G. D. Roberts, each worthy of high praise in his particular line. These men take a very strong position in the poetic ranks. There are few long poems of outstanding merit, native poetry being confined almost entirely to short, lyrical poems. Practically no *vers de société* has been attempted and but little dramatic verse of any value. Of the dramatic work of bygone days perhaps *Tecumseh*, by Charles Mair, is the most noteworthy example. While the dialogue of this play is slightly stiff and wooden, there is undoubtedly a certain amount of life in it as a whole. The only other dramatic work of any importance so far produced by Canadians is Marjorie L. C. Pickthall's *Woodcarver's Wife*, a dainty play more adapted to the library than the stage, and Norah M. Holland's *The Coming of the King*, a modern Nativity play, which has been successfully produced several times by the Drama League of London, Ontario, and the same writer's *Waking of the Lily* (originally produced as *A Masque of Spring*), a fairy fantasy. These plays are decidedly attractive in their delicacy of thought and handling and contain flashes of poetic writing much above the average. Free verse has made no headway in Canada, despite brave attempts by Mrs. Bowman and others to demonstrate its possibilities.

In Nature poetry Bliss Carman is easily first, though it must be noted that his earlier work is markedly better than his later. The late Archibald Lampman, with a genuine appreciation of the beauties of Nature and a fidelity in the portrayal of them, is apt to leave one a little cold. His pictures, while correct and beautiful, lack life. C. G. D. Roberts, following closely in the footsteps of his cousin, Bliss Carman, is somewhat wanting in the latter's felicity of expression. The late William Wilfred Campbell and Duncan Campbell Scott come very near the other three in order of merit. With these names we have about exhausted the male poets who have made their way into the front rank of Canadian verse. There are, however, quite a number of minor names—Robert Service, whose style is unmistakably influenced by Kipling; R. J. C.

Stead, who, among much commonplace, at times rises to decidedly strong verse; Father Dollard, whose Irish folk-ballads contain many charming lines, and others of less note.

Among the women poets Pauline Johnson, Isabella Valancey Crawford, Marjorie L. C. Pickthall and Norah M. Holland are in the lead. Pauline Johnson, herself of "Six Nations" Indian origin, takes priority for originality of theme and vigour. Her wonderfully melodious *Song My Paddle Sings*, known all over the English-speaking world, breathes the very spirit of Canada's wide, wild waterways. Marjorie Pickthall excels in delicacy and sweetness of language. She seems to suggest in her phrasing the exquisite traceries of some old cathedral window. Isabella Crawford, in convincing lines, was the first, and almost the only, writer of Canadian epic poetry, depicting the pioneer life of the colony's early settlers. These three, alas! have crossed the dark river. Miss Norah Holland's work is especially noticeable for its picturesque imagery, facility of expression, harmonious blending of words and, above all, for a spontaneity that shows the writer to be sure of herself and her inspiration and not striving after artificial effect.

There are many other women who have done good work in the field of poetry—Katherine Hale, Marian Osborne, Isabel Ecclestone McKay, Virna Sheard—all writers of pleasant and sometimes truly poetic verse. Mrs. McKay, especially, has done some charming poems for children. There are quite a number of very dainty writers of occasional verse, but whose work is not of sufficient quantity yet to publish in book form. *En passant* I would venture the opinion that the main trouble with Canadian writers is that they possess no power of self-criticism. They appear to be utterly unconscious of when they are doing good work and when bad. The consequence is that they pour out both alongside each other in one unending flood that needs careful filtering.

This short review is written for English-speaking readers; but no article on Canadian poetry would be complete without mention of the French writers of Quebec and the Lower Provinces. Among the great names of

olden days are F. X. Garneau, Pierre Chauveau, Louis Fiset, Adolphe Poisson and, greatest of them all, Louis Honoré Fréchette; this last being practically the only one known outside Canada. He came into wider notice in 1879 when he took the Prix Monthyon from the French Academy with *Les Fleurs Boreales*. His *La Legende d un Peuple* (1887) is the accepted epic of the French-Canadian race. His tone is, perhaps, a trifle too strident and he inclines a little too much towards rhetorical effect; but he shows a wonderful command of words combined with a perfect mastery of form. Other lesser writers are Leon Pamphile Le May, W. Chapman, who wrote *Les Aspirations*, and Dr. Nérée Beauchemin, whose work displays great poetic genius and that unerring eye for local colour which distinguishes the true poet. Like their English-speaking brothers, there are many writers of occasional verse and some anonymous ballads in the French language that show undoubted talent and striking beauty. The dominant note in all the French writers is a passionate love for their own race and the glories of what was once New France.

Great attention is being paid in Canadian universities to the finer arts, so we may expect new and stronger poets to arise. At present the reading public do not encourage Canada's poets as they ought. Higher education may raise them to a sense of the importance of poetry to a nation's welfare; but it is to be feared that our everyday energetic Canadians are more prone to worship in the Temple of Mammon than at the sacred Fount of Aganippe. However, as I said at starting, Canadian poetry is not yet very old. It will grow. KRINO.

(We have the privilege of publishing in this issue two new poems by Miss Norah Holland, who is accepted by the more responsible critics of the Dominion as "Canada's leading woman-poet to-day." She is essentially a Canadian, having been born, as were her parents and grandparents, in Ontario. On her mother's side she is related to W. B. Yeats, much of whose earlier Celtic mysticism breathes through her poems, which show strong sympathy with her ancestral Ireland, coupled almost paradoxically with a sincere love and admiration of England—a remarkably rare and beneficial blending in these hectic days.)

TWO POEMS BY NORAH M. HOLLAND:

THE IRISH PEASANT TO HIS MISTRESS

IF I had silver at my command,
Many's the gift I'd lay in your hand;
I would be giving you, O my sweet,
Shoes of silk for your little feet,
Silken gloves for your fingers white,
And a chain of gold for your delight;
But since 'tis young I am and poor,
None of all these I hold in store.

Had I the power to bring gifts more rare,
Sure, I'd pluck the stars to adorn your hair;
Wind of the west and wind of the south
Should blow you perfume, sweet as your mouth:
Wine of the gods your drink should be,
And to light your candle, astore machree,
I'd draw the moon from the misty skies,—
But she'd fade and die before your eyes.

Yet 'tis myself has gifts to bring—
Dappled trout from the crystal spring,
Roses, still with the dew-drops pearled,
Fresh as when God first made the world,
Coral mushrooms, all freaked with fawn
By fairies' feet that danced till dawn;
And if it's more you are wanting still,
'Tis my heart I'll give you, to keep or kill.

I SPOKE TO GOD

I SPOKE to God and said:
"Thou, Who has given me
Only Thine enmity;
Giving me tears to drink, and bitter bread
Earned by hard service, loneliness and sorrow,
And pain and weariness,
A life I asked not for, and, on the morrow,
An instant's passage into nothingness;

How should I love Thee, Who hast set me here
To wander in a drear and endless wild ?
I love Thee not, nor fear."
He said : " Poor child !

" If I had given to thee
Fulness of all the earth,
Lapped thee in laughter, cradled thee in mirth,
Thou hadst forgotten Me.
And since, forgetting Me, all else had left thee,
And loves had failed thee, friendships ceased to be,
Lo ! for a few brief hours I have bereft thee,
That thou might'st hold them through eternity.
Look up to where I stand
From where thou wanderest, passion tossed and wild,
Waiting to lay them back into thine hand,
Poor child ! "

NORAH M. HOLLAND.

TO CHARON

O boatman hoar,
When those to me most bound shall carry me
Down to your boat, across a shore of pain,
Or suddenly you come to ferry me
Straight from the tasks I scarcely down have lain,
Then set me by the mast, that I perceive,
While restless waters ripple round the stern,
Their love in all the faces that I leave,
Knowing I may not back again return ;
And all the little fields so flower bright,
And all the cities where I found a friend
And all the lanes I loved shall fill my sight,
And gladden me until the mists descend.
But in mid-stream,
Then place me in the prow, that I may see,
While swifter waters clamour at the side,
The hands of him outstretched to welcome me,
Who wades to meet me through the troubled tide.

EVELYN D. BANGAY.

FROM BED BY CANDLELIGHT

THE moth-winged night quivers in sentry-watch
Outside the window-pane,
And guards my opal-tinted room.
The spindle-legs of tables stand in stain
Of vague crystalline blue ;
And here the milky gloom
Is set with topaz gleams, and there a touch
Of brittle rays of peridot.
My sapphire couch breathes through
The eastern silk of sheets
In bluebell shades, which, shot
With moonstone lights above,
Enfold me as I lie within the casket room.
My dreams, star-weighted, close
Down round about me, guarding love
That lies within the very heart's repose,
Dawn thoughts that spring
More light than feathers from the moth's pale wing.

HILDA FINNEMORE.

WHEN I DIE

WHEN I die I should like
To become a part of the wind,
To sweep across open spaces
And whisper where leaves are,
To blow cool on the face of the moon,
Or over brown ploughed fields
The month the gorse is golden,
To stir the sunlight among nut trees,
And beat soft against the feathered breasts of birds,
To ride cloud galleons,
Or to creep beneath ground ivy.
But most I'd like to move leaf shadows,
And to fly near to the sea
Touching her saltness with my lips.

ARMOREL NANCE.

THE LITTLE HOUSE

THE little house we planned and made
So gay with love—its only toll—
And worked and slept and loved and played
And gave the little house a soul.
Oh, little house, your soul has fled ;
And Love ? Well, love must then be dead.

I wander thro' your rooms and hear
The moaning of an autumn wind,
And what I had and held most dear
I touch and leave it all behind.
Oh, little house, how could you be
So kind and yet so base to me ?

Here lies the garden, storm-swept, wet ;
The climbing rose the wind has torn
From trellis work ; the mignonette
Is blackened, and the grass forlorn ;
Sadly the wind's low, fitful moan
Sinks plaintive by the dial stone.

For love-lies-bleeding is the flower
We should have planted far and wide,
With brambles wreathed on every bower,
But not the flowers of love and pride ;
Not rosemary, but poppies strew,
With nightshade and a bunch of rue.

Oh, little house, it is too late ;
Your soul cries in the garden plot
Striving to enter in ; prostrate
Before the shrine where love is not.
Poor little soul, the door is wide
And yet it cannot come inside.

So, little house, you've lost your soul ;
Well, settle down to smug content ;

You've had the love and ta'en its dole,
Spent Eastertide before your Lent ;
Open your doors, yes, fling them wide,
For monied fools to gape inside.

M. K. G. WARRAND.

"I NEVER THOUGHT"

I NEVER thought October skies
Could be so blue,
Or larks could sing such careful songs,
My dear, till you
Whispering a few soft words one golden hour,
First showed me God in every leaf and flower.

Now, when I gently stoop to kiss
Your little hands,
Fashioned as any flower, I think
He understands
I realise at last, through Love's clear morn,
The reason why His little Son was born.

JOY MALDEN.

TO M. W.

I THINK I did not know
Until they came to me and said
That you were dead—
You, who had very gaily walked with me
One little week ago !

Then, as I seemed to see
Your friendly eyes, the knowledge came—
Sudden and swift as flame—
How God must love your eyes, your voice, your smile :
And that you walk with Him, as for awhile
You walked with me.

KATHLEEN SIMMONDS.

ON BALLADS

CHILDREN who have never peered into the wood where Red Riding Hood's wolf had his lair, or seen the House of the Three Bears, or discovered among the elm-crowns the turrets of the Castle where Beauty slept, have been cheated of a portion of their heritage: and the boy or girl who has never listened for Robin Hood's horn in the greenwood, or kept tryst with the Nut-Brown Mayde or sailed the seas to Norroway with Sir Patrick Spens—such boys and girls have not entered a land of magicry—theirs for the taking—a land which in later years they may discover but which will never belong to them as wholly as it would have done if they had entered their ballad-kingdom when they entered their teens.

It is the fairies of childhood who point the way to the Elf-Queens' royaumes, and it is the Elf-Queens, riding before on milk-white horses, caparisoned with silver bells, who show the way to the enchanted forest of Arden, and to the moonlit territory of Oberon and Titania.

Anyone who has given loving study to the plays of our greatest poet must have come to the conclusion that as a boy he learned many an old ballad. During his little years at Stratford he heard much talk of ballads: he was twelve years old when Queen Elizabeth came to Warwickshire for the famous fête at Kenilworth, and for miles around, many a day before and after the fête, there would be much talk among the Warwickshire folk of songs and their singers: in later years he was never ashamed to be beholden to the ballads that he heard as a boy, and quoted constantly from them.

For example, the Clown in *Twelfth Night* sings two stanzas from "Robyn, jolly Robyn"; "The Willow Song" in *Othello* is certainly inspired by the ballad, "Willow, Willow, Willow," and in *Henry IV* Silence hums scraps from the Robin Hood ballads. All through the tragedies and comedies similar examples may be found. Of course,

it would be manifestly unfair to compare even the finest ballad with the greatest work of Shakespeare or Milton or Shelley, or Wordsworth or Keats, as unfair as it would be to compare a child and a grown-up ; indeed, the ballads have many of the qualities that endear children to us, sincerity, directness, and an utter absence of self-consciousness. Longfellow has written of them very happily in Book II of *Hyperion* :—

> " I have a passion for ballads . . . They are the gypsy children of song, born under the green hedgerows in the leafy lanes and bypaths of literature in the genial summertime."

Though these unknown makers cannot claim to rank with the greatest, yet they placed all the wonderful galaxy of Elizabethan poets in their debt, and would Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hogg, Scott, Burns, Keats and Browning (to take only a few) have left us " The Ancient Mariner," " Lucy Gray," " Kilmeny " (written in the loveliest form of elfin dialect), " Proud Maisie " (which of all modern ballads captures most successfully the old spirit), " Tam o' Shanter," " La Belle Dame sans Merci " (surely a sister of Thomas the Rhymer's Queen !) and " How they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix," if they had never read Percy's Reliques, the collections of Motherwell and the quarrelsome but conscientious Ritson, or Professor Child's monumental collection, containing every available version of every ballad the compiler could lay his hands on ?

Comparatively few folks can hope to own Child's five volumes, but Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge* have hit on the happy idea of making a collection from the materials collected by Child, a selection which in no way is meant to be a substitute for Child's collection, but which affords an excellent conspectus of English and Scottish ballad literature in one volume. The introduction by Mr. Kittredge deals with the sources, origins, and manner of composition of the ballads and is of

* *English and Scottish Ballads.* Edited by Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge. (Harrap.)

such interest that it is a pity the compilers did not see their way, for reasons of space, to having it printed in larger type.

Here is Mr. Kittredge on the subject of those for whom the ballads were written :

" They belonged in the first instance to the whole people, at a time when there were no formal divisions of literate and illiterate, when the intellectual interests of all were substantially identical from king to peasant."

and again—on the composing of a ballad :—

" The mere act of composition (which is quite as likely to be oral as written) is not the conclusion of the matter : it is rather the beginning. The product as it comes from the author is handed over to the folk for oral transmission, and thus passes out of his control."

Mr. Kittredge establishes very ably that these ballads were the work of individual unknown authors, which has been added to and in many instances altered by countless oral transmissions, passed " from age to age, from lip to lip of shepherds, peasants, nurses, of all that continue nearest to the natural state of man,"* and he makes it quite clear that the folk as folk never have composed poetry and never can. This scholarly summing up of a very complicated subject should be carefully read and studied by all ballad lovers.

Before the ballads there are brief interesting notes giving significant stanzas from versions not included in the volume, and the compilers are to be congratulated on their choice. Take " The Twa Sisters," a ballad which shows a power of intense concentration, of which there are Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Faröe and Swedish versions, as well as many English versions, they have certainly chosen the two most beautiful—no easy task when dealing with twenty-seven different English versions !

Apart from the deep charm of the ballads, many of them have a great historical value. They picture for us the life and customs of the time : they describe clothes, weapons and interiors, and sometimes they tell us how the people

* Andrew Lang.

felt towards the laws and the law-givers. Surely the historians of to-morrow will learn more of a day that is passing by reading Masefield's songs of his splendid sailing ships, Kipling's soldier Ballads, and Mackereth's " North Country Carrier," than by perusing stacks of Blue books or miles of Hansard ! These and other poets are doing for our age what that unknown balladist did for his, when he wrote the finest and most remarkable of the old heroic ballads, with its flashes of chivalry and its brilliant exaggeration, " The hunting in the Cheviot." Do any five stanzas sum up with nobler effect or finer simplicity a mortal conflict than these which tell of the death of Douglas in the Battle of Otterburn ?

But Percy wi' his good broad-sword
Was made o' the metal free,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow
Till backward he did flee.

Then he called on his little page,
And said, " Run speedily,
And bring my ain dear sister's son,
Sir Hugh Montgomery."

" My nephew bauld," the Douglas said,
" What boots the death of ane ?
Last night I dreamed a dreary dream
And I ken the day's thy ain.

" My wound is deep, I fain wad sleep,
Nae mair I'll fighting see :
Gae lay me in the breaken bush
That grows on yonder lee."

He liftit up that noble lord,
Wi' the saut tear in his e'e
And hid him in the breaken bush
On yonder lily lee.

Every beck and glen around Otterburn is
full of ballad notes
Borne out of long ago.

Every foot of grass and ling is overset with memories and legends. It is the country of gallant defeats and bloody victories—of midnight forays and luring fairies—of desperate raids and more desperate recoveries; a country where ghosts, witches, bogles, goblins, kelpies, outlaws, harpers, knights and ladies beckon to you in the summer gloaming, and lead you spellbound with the wizardry of the Middle Ages.

> The life, the delight and the sorrow.
> Of troublous and chivalrous years."*

These ballads possess one essentially British characteristic —*viz.*, their keen appreciation of Nature. Time and time again we read lovely lines of the greenwood. Who ever thinks of Robin Hood away from the greenwood! Is not the very fragrance of the greenwood in the opening lines of "Robin Hood and the Monk"?

> In somer when the shawes be sheen
> And leves be large and long,
> It is full of mery in feyre foreste
> To here the foulys song,
>
> To see the dere draw to the dale,
> And leve the hilles tree
> And shadow them in the leves grene
> Under the grene-wode tree.

Nature does not initially make us *think*, she makes us *feel*, and in many a ballad there is a deep feeling, *a sehnsucht* for the land where the balladist has been bred: we often hear the same motif as that we hear in some of the Greek folk-songs:

> Why am I not near the hills?
> Why have I not the mountains to keep me company?

Scattered throughout the whole ballad literature are delightful sure sketches of Nature—just a line here and there, telling of a May-day with "the gowans growing gaily";

* Swinburne.

of a vale where "the primrose spreads so sweetly"; where "the norlan flowers spring bonny"; sunlight on "the fernie brae"; on "the cherry tree in blossom"; on "cows lowing in the glen"; on "goss-hawks a-flaffin their wings sae wide"; on "milk-white swans" and "milk-white does"; on "ladies straight as willow-wands": and with what economy of words do the old singers' describe scenery or weather:

The wind doth blow to-day my love
And a few small drops of rain.

. . . . .

The hallow days o' Yule are come
The nights are lang an' dark.

. . . . .

Martinmas time
When the green leaves were falling.

. . . . .

on a midsummer day
When it rained, it did rain small.

. . . . .

Yt fell abowght the Lamasse tyde
When husbondes wynnes ther haye.

. . . . .

There was a knight, in a summer's night
Was riding o'er the lee
And there he saw a bonny birdy
Was singing upon a tree.

. . . . .

Adlatts Park is wide and broad
And grass growes green in our countrye.

. . . . .

a bonny summer day
When corn grew green an' yellow.

. . . . .

Etrick foreste is a fair foreste
In it grows mainie a semelie tree;
The hart, the hynd, the dae, the rae
And of a beastis grete plentie.

In many a ballad can be heard the lament of the curlew, the plaintive hoot of the hullet, the cuckoo's call over a

thicket, and the rhythm of running water—more beautiful than any other earthly music.

Certain flowers and trees in the Border Counties are such familiar and loved sights that we find them constantly mentioned in the ballads. Let us take the broom. In the ballad of "Lord John" the stanza goes:

"I'll wager, I'll wager," says Lord John,
"A hundred marks and ten,
That ye winna gae to the bonnie broom fields
And a maid return again."

The bonnie broom fields! In June that is a good description of the Ettrick vale. You can scarcely see the spiky foliage for the orange-yellow blossom. In the "Ballad of Broomfield Hall" the broom is used as a love-charm:

Take ye blossom of the broom,
The blossom it smells sweet
And strew it at your true love's head,
And likewise at his feet.

There is another lovely use of it in "Tam Lane," one of the most elfishly beautiful of all the ballads:

Up then spake the Queen o' the Fairies
Out o' a bush o' broom,
"She that has gotten young Tam Lane
Has gotten a stately groom."

Imagine a clear spring day, and the Fairy Queen with her chicory blue eyes and her windflower face rising "out o' a bush o' broom"!

How these old singers loved the spring, and though others have sung more exquisitely, more grandly of the spring, yet to some of us the spontaneous piping of a Pan is as dear as the serene harping of an Apollo; there is a very ancient tradition that the first poets of all were those who listened to the song whispered by the forest; they caught it in their hearts and put it into human speech; if this be true, surely no one will deny these unknown balladists their meet place in the song-train of the Muses.

DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE.

FIR BRANCHES DARK ACROSS THE MOON

FIR branches dark across the moon !
Fear in the branches sits and swings.
Soundless the sweep of the owl's soft wings,
Green eyes lit with a baleful glare,
Beak curved cruelly and talons bare.
Fear in the branches sits and swings.

Fir branches dark across the moon !
Fear in the branches wakes and stirs.
Close stand the ranks of the watching firs.
Green eyes fixed in a hungry stare,
O my Lady Owl will have dainty fare.
Fear in the branches wakes and stirs.

Fir branches dark across the moon !
Fear in the branches laughs aloud.
A rustle of dread where the shadows crowd,
A silent swoop through the still night air—
And my lady applauds from her hidden lair.
Fear in the branches laughs aloud.

AGNES-MARY LAWRENCE.

TO MY GRANDMOTHER

THOUGH we seem wanton with our " broader views,"
Though we appear to havoc your dear faith,
And question words that your Good Master saith,
And though we seem to bruise

Beliefs that made the beauty of your days,
Beliefs whereby we now can see you stand
Firm, e'en when undefended, in a land
Of seeming Godless blaze,

Think not that with less reverence we move,
We do but seek out God with other eyes,
Although a new age with new wisdom rise,
It seeks the self-same Love.

E. W. MOOR

THE SEA

THE Sea's great voice is but a sigh to-night,
A soft-recurrent and caressing sigh :
Beneath a starred and June-set midnight sky
It ebbs and flows on sands the moon turns white.
Translated to a lullaby, its might,
A murmured whim, a whispered word. . . . And I
But seem to hear humanity's outcry. . . .
The million millions . . . calling for more light !

Like eagles longing to exploit the air,
They would possess all worlds, enlist the will !
Set free their spirits from the earth's dull care,
And all resisting barriers make nil. . . .
Like that great Sea, to-night so quiet there,
What missions do these forces vast fulfil ?

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

AUTUMN JOYS

I SING of the autumn weather,
When the cornfields shout together,
The bees hum o'er the heather,
And the ripples kiss the sand ;
I sing of the open spaces,
The hills, and windy places,
And the sheep with patient faces
That roam the pastureland.

Come, drain the full year's wonder,
When autumn yields her plunder,
The brown nut splits asunder,
Ripe apples strew the earth !
All sowing hath its reaping,
Ere winter wind comes sweeping,
And wan grey mists a-creeping
O'er fields of harvest mirth.

MARGARET ORMISTON.

A PERSIAN PROVERB IN 1923

A PERSIAN poet of the ancient days
Left us this proverb for our erring ways :
" 'Tis not enough to love," he said. " Alas !
We must know *how* to love, and how to pass
This wisdom to our brother, how to teach
The law of loving "—so did the poet preach
In that far land where Zarathrustra turned
A multitude toward a light that burned—
Oh ! nations of the world, ere yet too late
Take then the lesson—learn, and dedicate
Yourselves anew to love, and how to love,
And how to teach, inspired from above,
The law of loving ; till all clamours cease,
And once again the world be bathed in peace.

CORINNE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON.

SOLACE

WHEN you are weary, worn and luckless, dear,
I would bring you love ; and when
You are happy, radiating cheer,
I would bring love again ;
And when you sorrowed, lonely and distressed,
Counting all alone your heartaches sore,
I would bring love, the measure full, down-pressed,
And lay it at your door.

Though others offered fruits and precious wine,
Tapestries and gems—and perfumes from the East—
I would bring you love, as gift of mine,
And bid you feast ;
Then as the flaming sun crept to the West
And hung, a golden disk, on ocean's brink,
I would bring you love—of all rare wines the best—
And bid you drink.

GRACE E. HALL.

AMERICAN SECTION:

Previous Surveys.—In May–June: THE INTERNATIONALISM OF POETRY; in July–August: THE ULTIMATE WEST IN POETRY.

BARDS OF THE SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST

AS we approach South-Western American poetry we are immediately reminded of recent volumes from South-Western poets, namely, *The Tide Comes In*, by Clement Wood (Dutton's); *Collected Poems*, by Vachel Lindsey (Macmillan); *In Colors of the West*, by Glenn Ward Dresbach (Henry Holt and Co.); *Voices of the South-west*, by Hilton Ross Greer (Macmillan); *Things That Are Mine*, by Scottie McKenzie Frasier (Steen Hinrichsen); and other noteworthy works, too numerous to describe.

There are doubtless two thousand poets that may be classed as poets of the South-West, meaning poets who were born or resided in States so classed. Some few, like Miss Lizette Woodworth Reese, Maryland's foremost poet, and Amelie Rives Troubetzkoy, noted poet author, were born, wrote and live in South and South-Western States; many, as in the case of the majority of the sixty poets given in the roster of South-Western poets in the *Voices of the South-west*, either resided or wrote the poems that brought them to public notice in South-Western States.

Virginia alone claims over fifty poets, and the list of native poets might be increased to over one thousand by including the less known, less published, though often highly deserving poets of the near past.

These are the scions of those original bards of the South-Western group of States of North America who, representing as they do, talent and achievement of an exceptional order, are insufficiently known.

Even in the South, until lately, they have been little read. But there is a quickening all along the line and in the South,

also, the people are reading more; and more writers are receiving national recognition.

* * *

The early literature of this group of States was deeply influenced by the aristocratic population of some of them, as in the Virginias, the Carolinas, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Kentucky. Other States are rich with Indian legends and territorial sagas, and with the lilt of negro melodies, carrying simple and poetical words; or with the hearty muscularity and boisterous bravery of cowboys and early settlers. In Oklahoma, for instance, the Red-man and his traditions form a basis for history, poetry and fiction not to be found in any other State. In Louisiana the gentry moved through their romantic histories amid magnificent forests, stately rivers, luxuriant vegetation, its numerous bayous overshadowed by secular oak trees and the picturesque scenery on the coast of the Gulf. Verily a fitting abode for poets.

There is literally a literary renaissance developing throughout America, and we find here in the South that this is emphasised, and with it there is a turning back to the older authors. Why not?

Foremost among the BARDS OF THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST we find five shining names: Poe, Hayne, Timrod, Lanier and Ryan. Be it said of them all, there is not to be found in their works a thought unbecoming a refined and chivalrous nature. They afford a standard to emulate that will take spiritual persistence to realise!

The first poetic writer, George Sandys, had his home at Jamestown, coming to Virginia in 1521, succeeding his brother as treasurer of this new colony. He lived the pioneer colonial life. Amid its trials he zealously compiled his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, begun in England. After a day in iron works or spent in encouraging shipbuilders, he sat down at night in the shadow of near forests and worked over his careful pentameters.

Following his name, scarce another voice is heard in verse before the Revolution. The type of culture developed in the South before the Civil War was not of a literary sort,

but rather agricultural and political. Behind New England in the field of poetry, they pursued the even tenor of their way, tenacious of the established. To this day there are almost no great publishers of the South. Writing was not taken seriously in those days—a lady, here and there, added to her list of advantages a few achieved poems, and that was about the most outstanding!

Two engaging centres, however, grew as the years went on. One was Richmond, the home of Poe, and Charleston, where Gilmore Simms's hospitality broadened the sympathies in his distinguished home. Hayne and Timrod led. It is, however, significant that they founded no schools, nor were they the prey of isms or ologies. They seem never to have felt the reform urge or fallen for any fanatical extravagance.

All of these men, at some time in their history, were a part of the Confederate Army, and flamed at moments in thrilling lyrics, but they all lived to accept the results and sing a new loyalty to our great Republic.

In passing, I may mention a poet of those days praised by Byron, the much-loved Richard Henry Wilde (1789–1847), who was born in Dublin, Ireland, and educated in Augusta, Georgia. He was a lawyer, and served as Congressman. He spent five years in Italy, and his farewell to America is characteristic:

> Farewell, my more than fatherland!
> Home of my heart and friends, adieu!
> Lingering beside some foreign strand,
> How oft I shall remember you!
> How often o'er the waters blue,
> Send back a sight to those I leave,
> The loving and beloved few,
> Who grieve for me—for whom I grieve.

On returning to New Orleans he wrote his famous *Rose*, of which I give a stanza:

> My life is like the summer rose,
> That opens to the Morning sky,
> But ere the shades of evening close
> Is scattered on the ground—to die!

Yet on the roses' humble bed
The sweetest dews of night are shed,
As if she wept the waste to see—
But none shall weep a tear for me!

George D. Prentice (1802–1870), who was born in Connecticut, moved to Louisville, where he made a brilliant centre, quoting from his optimism as expressed in *The Flight of Years*, which seems to have a present application:

Weep not, that Time
Is passing on—it will ere long reveal
A brighter era to the Nations, Hark!
. . . . . 'Tis the voice
Of Infant Freedom—and her stirring call
Is heard and answered in a thousand tones
From every hilltop of her western home
And lo—it breaks across old ocean's flood—
And Freedom, Freedom, Freedom, is the answering shout
Of nations starting from the spell of years.

William Gilmore Simms (1806–1870), born in Charleston where he had his home, is best known for his *Atlantis:*

This the true sign of ruin to a race—
It undertakes no march and day by day
Drowses in camp, or with the laggard's pace
Walks sentry o'er possessions that decay;

Edward Coate Pinkney (1802–1828) wrote with a delightful touch. Quoting from his gracious *A Health:*

I fill this cup to one make up
Of liveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;—
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that like the air,
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

In Danville, Kentucky, was born Theodore O'Hara (1820–1867), who wrote the great poem compared often with Gray's elegy, *The Bivouac of the Dead*, which, verse by

verse, is to be found on the gates of Arlington Cemetery, Washington, D.C. O'Hara became a clerk in the Treasury Department at Washington, and served as Major in the Mexican War. I quote one stanza of this noble utterance :

> The muffled drum's sad roll has beat
> The soldier's last tattoo.
> No more on life's parade shall meet
> That brave and fallen few.
> On Fame's eternal camping-ground
> Their silent tents are spread,
> And Glory guards, with solemn round
> The bivouac of the dead.

He was buried at Frankfurt, Kentucky, with the heroes.

Mrs. Margaret J. Preston (1820–1897), belonging to the school of Mrs. Browning, lived in Virginia, and wrote poetry full of supreme resignation and trust. Quoting a sample of her genius :

> What will it matter by and by
> Whether my path below was bright,
> Whether it wound through dark or light
> Under a gray or golden sky—
> When I look back on it by and by ?

As tragic as the life are the writings of Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849).

A handsome child, he was petted and fondled in his early years by his doting parents, and after five years in England at school, he went to the Richmond Academy, and later to West Point, from which place, after an inglorious record, he returned to Richmond. Always writing, and brilliant, he became the editor of the *Messenger*. Keen and merciless he was in his rapier-like criticism. Poe's masterpieces are too well known to require quoting.

Paul Hamilton Hayne was a poet marked with delicacy of high breeding, coming from the cultured class of England. His father was a lieutenant in U.S. Navy, and died early. He graduated from the Charleston College in 1850. Remain-

ing there, he wrote beautiful poetry. His marriage was a happy one, and a winning testimonial to this fact is his poem, *The Bonny Brown Hand*, from which I give a stanza :

> Oh, drearily, how drearily, the sombre eve comes down !
> And wearily, how wearily, the sea-board breezes blow !
> But place your little hand in mine—so dainty, yet so brown,
> For household toil hath worn away its rosy-tinted snow . . .

Hayne was a fine sonneteer :

> Pent in this common sphere of sensual shows
> I pine for beauty, beauty of fresh mien
> And gentle utterance and the charm serene . . .

ending with : " While care forgets to sigh, and peace hath balsamed pain."

The War brought great disaster to the Haynes. In Sherman's march to the sea they lost their home. He withdrew to the barrens of Georgia, and eighteen miles from Augusta he built a little cottage, where as he paced to and fro he wrote his poems. He never lost courage or hope, and became slowly known. Quoting from his *Dolce far Niente :*

> Let the world roll blandly on,
> Give me shadow, give me sun
> And a perfumed eve as this is
> Let me lie
> Dreamfully
> Where the last quick sunbeams shiver
> Spears of light athwart the river
> And a breeze which seems the sigh
> Of a fairy floating by,
> Coyly kisses
> Tender leaf and feathered grasses
> Yet so soft its breathing passes,
> These tall ferns, just glimmering o'er me—
> Hardly quiver !

With all its trials he had the poet's appreciation of life

and its value, and desired to live as long as possible, and voiced it feelingly in the following touching lines :

A little while I fain would linger here
Behold ! Who knows what soul dividing bars
Earth's faithful loves may part in other stars ?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair :
A little while I still would linger here.

The life story of Henry Timrod is a sad one, with hopes dashed and a gallant but unsuccessful fight against the malady which caused his death. He was born in Charleston (1829–1867). His family was of German descent—his father a poet, and his mother a beauty. He is another striking sample of a man turning poet where the early influences of a poetical mother and father must have done much to educate him to love beauty after the fashion of poets. He and his friend Hayne sat side by side at school. He went later to the University of Georgia, but was so cramped for means he was obliged to leave college and become a tutor. He was possessed of a shy and sensitive nature, and wrote for some time under the name of " Aglaus."

In 1860 his first poems in book form appeared from Ticknor and Fields, of Boston. He loved the classics, and gave constant evidence of so doing. After the style of Poe, he formulated a theory of poetry, but to beauty he added, as essential, power and truth, clearness, simplicity and force.

In diction he is said to resemble Wordsworth. He extols the use of the sonnet-form in which, like Hayne, he excelled. He has left many lovely ones. In *The Past*, which contains the teaching that we are the sum of all we have lived through, he says :

A shadowy land where Joy and Sorrow kiss,
Each still to each corrective and relief,
Where dim delights are brightened into bliss
And nothing wholly perishes but grief.
Ah me !—not dies—no more than spirit dies
But in a change like death is clothed with wings ;
A serious angel, with entranced eyes
Looking to far-off and celestial things.

He married the lovely Miss Kate Goodwin of Charleston. In a twelvemonth the army of Sherman sent him adrift, a ruined man. He was so ill his doctor ordered change of air, and he went to visit his dear friend Hayne. When after a period of much suffering the end seemed approaching, his sister said: "You will soon be at rest," he is reported to have answered: "Yes, my sister, but love is sweeter than rest."

Sidney Lanier, born in Macon, Georgia, in 1842, was a most versatile genius. He would turn from the flute to the guitar, or violin, organ or piano. In his *Science of English Verse* (1879) he stresses the importance of music in poetry. His life was a tragedy also after the war. In 1864 he became a blockade runner, and was captured and taken to Point Lookout Prison. After his release the struggle for life was terrible, having contracted tuberculosis. He had a sweet wife and four fine boys he dearly loved. On moving to Baltimore he became a lecturer at Johns Hopkins University, and he was very much influenced there by Poe. Quoting a stanza of *Betrayal:*

> The sun has kissed the violet sea,
> And burned the violet to a rose.
> O sea! Wouldst thou not better be
> More violet still? Who knows? who knows?
> Well hides the violet in the wood;
> The dead leaf wrinkles her a hood,
> And winter's ill is violet's good;
> But the bold glory of the rose
> It quickly comes and quickly goes—
> Red petals whirling in white snows,
> Ah me!

He often said: "The trouble with Poe was he didn't know enough," and was always studying. He never held the theory that science would abolish poetry — quite the contrary; he saw these two immense forces as working eventually together for mankind's welfare and happiness. In this he was very modern.

True to lofty ideals, artistic and moral beauty, he is

reported to have formulated the striking pronouncement: "Unless you are suffused with truth, wisdom, goodness and love, abandon the hope that the ages will accept you as an artist." He finally went to Ashville for his health, but on September 7, 1881, the struggle ended.

This is the first verse of Sidney Lanier's *Sunrise:*

In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain
Of the live-oak, the marsh and the main.
The little green leaves would not let me alone in my sleep;
Up breathed from the marshes, a message of range and of sweep;
Interwoven with waftures of wild sea-liberties, drifting,
Came through the lapped leaves, sifting, sifting,
Came to the gates of sleep.
Then my thoughts, in the dark of the dungeon-keep
Of the Castle of Captives hid in the city of sleep
Upstarted, by twos and by threes assembling:
Like the lips of a lady that forth falter—yes—
Shaken with happiness
The gates of sleep stood wide.

Father Ryan (1834–1886) is a striking figure in this list of gifted men. His birthplace is claimed as being Norfolk, Va., also Hagertown, Maryland, and Limerick, Ireland. He is revealed quickly by his poetry:

SONG OF THE MYSTIC

But far on the deep there are billows
That never shall break on the beach;
And I have heard songs in the Silence
That never shall float into speech;
And I have had dreams in the Valley
Too lofty for language to reach.

* * * *

And I have seen thoughts in the Valley,
Ah! me, how my spirit was stirred!
And they wear holy veils on their faces
Their footsteps can scarcely be heard:
They pass through the Valley like Virgins
Too pure for the touch of a word!

Also quoting from an exquisitely simple poem called *A Blessing:*

Be you near or be you far,
Let my blessing, like a star,
Shine upon you everywhere.
And in each lone evening hour,
When the twilight folds the flower
I will fold thy name in prayer.

Through eight lovely verses there is no break in the music or significance of this poem. Among the last things Father Ryan wrote is the following:

Go words of mine! and if you live
Only for one brief little day;
If peace, or joy, or calm you give
To any soul; or if you bring
A something higher to some heart,
I may come back again and sing
Songs free from all the arts of art.

I must not omit to say Francis Scott Key, who wrote the *Star-Spangled Banner*, was a native of the South. He was born in Frederick County, Maryland.

To this survey, necessarily sketchy and brief, should be added the name of Madison Cawein (1865–1914), whose recent death deprived America of one of her most gifted poets; a Kentuckian with a voice of gracious depths. A copious writer, it will be difficult to do him justice with the little I may include here:

TO GERTRUDE

You are weary of reading
I am weary of song.
The one is misleading;
The other o'er long:
All Art's over long.

Ah, would it were ours
To leave them, and then
'Mid the fields and the flowers
Be children again,
Just children again.

Very beautiful, with its haunting recurrent call, is *In Solitary Places:*

Up, up, my Heart, and forth where none perceives!
'Twas this that that sweet lay meant you heard in dreams.
Come, let me take rich payment,
For every care that grieves,
From Nature's prodigal purse
'Twas this that May meant
By sending forth that wind which round our eaves,
Whispered all night. Or was't the Spirit who weaves
From gold and glaucous green of early leaves,
Spring's radiant raiment?
Up, up, my heart and forth, where none perceives.

Another verse begins:

Come, let us forth, my heart, where none divines!
Into far woodland places . . .

And again:

Forth, Forth my Heart, and let us find our dreams—
There where they haunt each hollow!

And again:

Out, out my Heart! the world is white with Spring!

. . . .

Up, up my Heart and all thy hope put on—
Array thyself in splendor
Like some bright dragon-fly, May-fly, slender;
The irised lamels don
Of thy new armor . . .

Thy dream-world enter!
Up, up my Heart and all thy Hope put on.

Too lovely to leave out is *Mysteries:*

Soft and silken and silvery brown,
In shoes of lichen and leafy gown,
Little blue butterflies fluttering around her
Deep in the forest, afar from the town,
There where a stream came trickling down
I met with Silence, who wove a crown
Of sleep whose mystery bound her.

The first line of the second, third and fourth verses follows :

I gazed in her eyes, that were mossy green,

. . .

I gazed on her lips, that were dewy grey

. . .

I looked in her face that was pale and still,

Ending with :

I heard her voice, that was strange with pain
As a wind which whispers of wreck and rain.
To the leaves of the autumn, rustling, lonely :
And I felt the things that are felt in vain
By all—the longings that haunt the brain
Of man, that come and depart again
And are part of his dreamings only.

We can quote only a few lines from Cawein's epilogue :

Beyond the moon within a land of mist,
Lies the dim garden of all Dead Desires,

. . . .

Dead dreams, dead hopes, dead loves, and dead desires.

. . . .

The last verse :

Thither we go, dreamer and realist
Bound for the garden of all Dead Desires,
Where we shall find, perhaps, all life has missed
All life hath longed for when the soul aspires,
All Earth's elusive loveliness at tryst—
Dead dreams, dead hopes, dead loves, and dead desires.

In closing, one feels the shutting out of a thousand worthy voices we wish we had the space to quote.

As stated at a recent meeting of the Poetry Society of America by Mr. Du Bose Hayward—who, with Miss Josephine Pinckney and Mr. Hervey Allen, represented the South Carolina branch of the Society at this meeting—there is a poetry revival in the South. The records of the Society's meetings and activities made available to me by Mrs. Anna C. Markham, the Society's Secretary, who has kindly offered her valuable co-operation to further the

success of the American Section, and the columns of Poetry and Miss Monroe's selections of poems from South and South-Western poets, and the records of the activities of the poetical groups of Baltimore, Maryland, Norfolk and Richmond, Virginia, Memphis, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Savannah, Georgia, New Orleans, Louisiana, Cincinnati, Ohio, Dallas, Texas, and other South and South-Western States, are replete with evidence of growing interest in poetry in the States south and south-west of 40°.

* * *

I have a letter from Mrs. M. A. Newell, member of the Maryland Public Library Commission, mentioning the names of leading Maryland poets, as follows :

Maryland can claim poets of genuine worth and renown : Francis Scott Key, author of the *Star-Spangled Banner*, was one of her sons. This splendidly patriotic poem, however, is by no means his only achievement in the line of verse. Edgar Allan Poe, though born in Boston, was of Maryland ancestry, and was closely allied with this City. Mrs. Amelia B. Welby was one of Maryland's loved poets of the first half of the last century, and was endowed with rare delicacy and charm.

James Ryder Randall, though known most widely as the author of *My Maryland*—a truly magnificent outburst of patriotic fervour —was the author of numerous poems which entitle him to a conspicuous place in our galaxy of song.

Rev. John Bannister Tabb, a musician and a poet, combined the religious ardor of Crashaw with the grace of Keats, and, not only by the blindness which darkened his closing years, he suggests England's Puritan Poet.

Pre-eminent among Maryland's poets of the present is Miss Lizette Woodworth Reese, especially admired and noted as a writer of exquisite sonnets, some of which are almost unsurpassed in technique and power and inspiration. Miss Virginia Woodward Cloud has gained prominence as a writer of ballads and other forms of verse. Mrs. Arthur B. Kinsolving has published several volumes of verse which are graceful and tender, and Mrs. James Latimer U. Lano is fast winning renown in the field of metrical composition.

* * *

While we may not be able to do poetic justice to all contemporary poets of the South, South-West and Ultimate

West, because even the generous allowance of space made available by THE POETRY REVIEW for the American Section would not suffice to treat more than the high lights, I welcome the contributions of those who wish to aid in doing poetic justice to the worthy native bards of the past generations, whose names have been obscured by time, and the fact that their works have been out of print for many years. Posterity owes to these bards the perpetuation of their names, and I shall be glad to receive communications on this subject, which should be addressed to me at 27, West 67th Street, New York City.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

ACROSS THE WAY

(ON BARROW STREET, NEW YORK CITY)

OLD, old man by the window-sill
What do you think of, sitting so still ?
You gaze straight ahead and I know you see
Visions never imagined by me.

The smoke from your old clay pipe unfurls
And placidly 'round your grey head curls ;
Are these the dreams of your long agos
That you breathe up now thru your old, hook'd nose ?

Did you, weazen'd brown old man,
Dance in your youth, to the Pipes of Pan ?
Did your harden'd, bitter face,
Smile once, with a charming grace ?

Old man ! tell me what to do !
Must I grow old then, just like you ?
Is it for this that youth flies by—
To sit in the window, and then to die ?

EDNA ALBERTA BAILEY.

THE DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY

THE POETS AND THEIR OWN WORK.

CORINNE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON—CLEMENT WOOD—GEORGE STERLING—ANGELA MORGAN—JOHN HALL WHEELOCK—JEANNE ROBERT FOSTER—LOUIS UNTERMEYER—PERCY STICKNEY GRANT—LILLA CABOT PERRY—ARTHUR CREW INMAN—GRACE E. HALL—HAZEL HALL.

WHO would not like to read the expressions of opinion of Milton, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Byron, Emerson, Bryant, Whitman and the other great poets regarding their own poems—which they considered their best? I deem it a distinct loss that we have not their own expressions regarding their own poems.

Believing that many of the readers of THE POETRY REVIEW would like to know first hand the opinions of the contemporary American poets regarding their own works, I have written to the authors of recent books asking which of their poems they like best. The answers form a distinct, interesting symposium of poetic values, so interesting that we are planning to make this a regular feature of the American Section.

* * *

Mrs. Douglas Robinson, better known in the poetic world as Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, the distinguished sister of the late ex-President Theodore Roosevelt, author of the volumes of poetry, *The Call of Brotherhood*, *One Woman to Another*, *Service and Sacrifice*, and *Collected Poems*, who, with Charles Hanson Towne, selected the poems collected in *Roosevelt as the Poets Saw Him* (Scribner's), advises that a serious mistake occurred in printing her poem *Vision* in this last book, and we are glad to print the corrected poem in the REVIEW:

VISION.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 1912.

Friend of the people, purposeful and strong.
You, who would right their wrong.
You, of the ardent eyes
That woo the glory of the further skies!
For the glad answer of a new sunrise
Must you then wait so long?

Oh! Man of Vision! though the rest be blind,
You, who do love Mankind,
You, who believe
That our fair Country shall indeed retrieve
The promise of the ages. You shall find
Your heart's reprieve.

With your own motto
"Spend, and so be spent,"
Your high intent
Makes of yourself a willing instrument.
With heart and soul afire
You do aspire
But to be broken, should the cause require,
An arrow shattered ere the bow be bent!

What though the sordid sneer!
They may not hear
The cry of those
Who suffer the fierce throes
Of pain and hunger after deadly toil.
Your brothers of the soil
Follow your beacon light
Away from their dark night.

And in the end,
Though you be spent,
You, who were glad to spend,
Who would not be
A baffled Moses with the eyes to see
The far fruition of the Promised Land,
Who would not understand
How to lead captive dread Captivity,
Who would not even crave
A lost and lonely grave
By Jordan's wave?

Mrs. Robinson has written me an interesting letter, part of which I reproduce herewith, as it will interest the readers, because it states which are the favourite poems of this representative American woman, who participates in most of the outstanding public movements, and how she wrote one of these poems at a time when she was resting from a series of national activities :

* * *

You ask which of my poems is my favourite. I think I care most for *Amfortas* and for *Spring on the Mountain*. The latter came to me on our Virginia farm, which itself is over 3,000 feet high. One day I came out on the little porch in May, and realised that the fleeting May blossoms were gone already in the valley. That afternoon I rode up the trail to White Top Mountain (7,000 feet high), and all the flowers came back again, with the higher altitude, and it came to me that as one mounts higher, youth and beauty come back.

It sang in my head—the poem—as I rode, and I simply put it down when I got off my horse.

My brother, Colonel Roosevelt, was fondest of my *Call of Brotherhood*, which, he said, expressed in verses what he tried to do when he accepted the leadership of the Progressive Party. He also cared for *The Path that Leads Nowhere*, which, with my sonnet, *Stretch out your Hand*, is always asked for most for anthologies and various books. . . . Just at present my thoughts have been so occupied with politics that I only have this little poem, which I enclose should you care to use it for the Review. I am so glad that it is giving so much space to the American Section. I congratulate you again. . . .

Mrs. Robinson's own favourite poems follow :

AMFORTAS.

I am the Sinner, purer than the sin,
I am the Doer, worthier than the deed,
I am the Loser, who was meant to win,
I, the Forswearer, yet who loved the Creed.

I, the Inheritor of Holiness,
The knighted Guardian of the mystic Grail,
Lo ! I am lost in deep and dire distress,
For I have loved the best, and yet could fail.

I was the bearer of the Holy Spear,
But, through my sin, the sacred Thing I bore

Turned on my breast, and what I hold most dear
Has left an anguished wound for evermore.

Mine was a soul freeborn to love the light
Astir with winged hope and high emprise,
Self slain, and chained to dark and dreadful night,
Though doomed to deathlessness it faints and dies.

To love the right, and yield unto the wrong,
To have the best, and know it, yet to lose ;
To be the weak, though born to be the strong,
To crave the pure, and yet the loathly choose.

Perchance the tortured terror which I bear
For ever burning in my bleeding breast
Shall purge my sin and win for me a share
In the Redeemer's gift of perfect Rest.

I am the Sinner, purer than the sin,
I am the Doer, worthier than the deed,
I am the Loser, who was meant to win
I, the Forswearer, yet who loved the Creed.

SPRING ON THE MOUNTAIN.

Love of mine, come climb the height
Far beyond the thirsty plain,
There we'll find our lost delight,
There the Spring is born again,
High above this dreamy dell,
Where her first born flowers fade
We shall see her in the spell
Of her coming. In the glade,

Where the balsam branches spread
Shadows o'er the deeper blue
Of the violets we thought dead,
There, the bellwort's golden hue
Rivals still the sunlight's gleam—
Come ! My heart is wild and gay
With the glory of the dream
Of a reincarnate May !

Love of mine, I cannot wait,
For our joy attends, aloof
Let us go with hearts elate
There to put it to the proof.
What if, as we meet the Spring
Evanescent, frail and fair,
Swift, on its elusive wing,
Our lost youth should greet us there!

* * *

We can easily conceive that one of the pleasantest things in a poet's life would be to see printed what he or she thinks of his or her own poems. I daresay that that never happened, because the reviewer can never quite express what the poet visions, and the poet would not express the actual visionings for publication.

The consciousness of writing for publication robs the author of that free expression that represents one's actual thoughts.

"The truth about the matter is this," a poet will say, like a public man. "But I cannot write it for publication."

"Why not?" you ask, knowing very well what the answer should be, because you would act the same way if you were asked to express yourself for publication about your own works.

* * *

If you happen to be one of the leading poets of America, and you are asked to state for THE POETRY REVIEW which of your own poems you consider the best, and why, and you know that the readers of THE POETRY REVIEW will want to know what you really think, and will be apt to believe with the maxim-makers that "He who undervalues himself is justly undervalued by others," you have to consider that "a false modesty is the meanest species of pride," and that between the two alternatives it is better to set forth a presentation of your works that will do justice to them.

The following letter from Clement Wood, one of the foremost American poets, author of *The Tide Comes In* (E. P. Dutton and Co.), *Glad of Earth*, *The Earth Turn*

South, Jehovah, winner of several poetry prizes, is especially interesting because it is frank and to the point :

I am sorry that an unavoidable stress of business, plus something of a poet's dilatoriness, has postponed my answer to your friendly letter of some weeks ago. I only trust that this will not be too late for you.

REVIEW OF "THE TIDE COMES IN."

I think your idea of asking the poets for their preferences an admirable one. The book has received high praise : one official high in the Authors' League said that the *Eagle Sonnets* in it established me in his mind as the leading poet in America ; Gamaliel Bradford wrote of the same sonnets that nothing in all modern poetry touched them for depth of insight and inevitable singing, with the possible exception of some of the sonnets of Leopardi. John Hall Wheelock wrote that, in those sonnets, I first lifted the reader higher than any modern poetry in thought and music, and then carried him higher yet. These are good words, even if the sonnets do not quite deserve them.

The *Eagle Sonnets* are the crown of the book, and I think one of the best things in modern American poetry. A few of the better sonnets of Masefield, in my opinion, touch them ; but no American sonnets. The best single one is perhaps IX ; though the beauty series, XVIII–XXI, are a higher flight, VII, XVII, XXIV, XXVII, best individually for thought, and XI for music. *The Black Rose* is as magical a lyric as the average of the better things of Poe ; the closing, *The Tide Goes Out*, is ended on a crashing chord ; *Her Daughter*, although long, is a memorable thing ; *Jack and Jill*, VII and XI, exquisite lyrics ; and *Canopus*, a distinguished narrative in a stanza form, Gamaliel Bradford calls the best ever contributed to English verse, not excluding Chaucer's and Spencer's, because it avoids their fault of an obtrusive rhyming couplet at the end. So, you see, I like several things, and like them very much. Oh, and *The Purple Doe* is a lovely song.

If you have only one thing to quote, make it one of the mentioned *Eagle Sonnets*. The book is perhaps worth more than one quotation.

I enclose *The Sea-Mother* and *Shore and Sea* for the "Bartlett Prize" competition ; and *Midgard*, *Joysong*, *The Gateway* and *Travelling*, for you to pick as many as you will for use in THE POETRY REVIEW. . . .

Mr. Wood's favourite, Sonnet IX, from the *Eagle Sonnets*, follows :

IX

O bitter moon, O cold and bitter moon,
Climbing your midnight hillside of bleak sky,
The earth, as you, once knew a blazing noon :
Night brings the silver hour when she will die.
We shall be cold as you are, and as bitter,
Icily circling toward a tepid fire,
Playing at life with our deceitful glitter,
Past joy, past hope, for ever past desire.

Yet still the forest lifts its leafy wings,
To flutter for a while before the chill ;
And still the careless heart is gay, and sings
In the green temple on the dusty hill ;
And the gulls tumble ; and the homing ships
Peer for the harbour ; and the sand drips.

Mr. Wood is right. It is hard to select from these all very musical sonnets. One of my preference is Sonnet XI, which reads :

XI

When down the windy vistas of the years
Has blown the last mad hurricane of being,
When grief has gone, throu' lack of eyes for tears,
And life is blind, throu' lack of eyes for seeing ;
Only the sluggish soughing of the sea
Moving, of all the bright unrest we know,
Ebbing to final immobility,
While the earth's drowsy spinning note is low—

That is the hour to weight each brave endeavour . . .
The lark of hope sings in our morning air
That life is youth and shall endure for ever :
While, in his breast, the maggot of despair
Feeds, in its cool, undeviating lust.
Its silence sings a dusty song of dust.

* * *

A letter from George Sterling reminds us that the literary world is welcoming Sterling's latest book, *Selected Poems*

(Henry Holt and Co.), and no one can doubt that his reputation as one of the very first of American poets was made secure a number of years ago, and will stand "When much clamour has gone down the wind."

Selected Poems make a good addition to the Sterling works: *The Testimony of the Suns and Other Poems*, 1903; *A Wine of Wizardry and Other Poems*, 1908; *The House of Orchids and Other Poems*, 1911; *Beyond the Breakers and Other Poems*, 1914; *Exposition Ode*, 1915; *Yosemite*, 1915; *The Caged Eagle and Other Poems*, 1916; *The Binding of the Beast amd Other Poems*, 1917; *Lilith Dramatic Poems*, 1919; *Rosamund* (dramatic poem), 1920; *Sails and Mirage and Other Poems*, 1921.

Mr. Sterling writes:

It's a pleasure to learn that you're to review the *Selected Poems*, and I hope you like some of them. As for my own preferences, I suppose I could place first *The Swimmers*, and after that *Spring in Carmel*, *Mirage*, *The First Food*, *A Girl Dancing* and *Sails*.

But my personal tastes are negligible, nor are they usually those of my infrequent readers.

It is good news that THE POETRY REVIEW is to have an American Section, with you as its editor, and I hasten to send in (herewith) my subscription. I am glad, also, to submit a poem—one that the *Atlantic Monthly* wrote highly of, but didn't accept! An annoying habit of our loftier-browed magazines.

As to the Sea-Sonnet competition, I'll be glad to enter, but have no particular hopes of writing the winning sonnet, as the work will be done with deliberate intention, not in a mood of unavoidable inspiration, the thing I always wait for.

I've written a good deal of sea-verse, and should like to have you see more of it. I lived at Carmel for over nine years, with the sea always in my ears and often in my eyes. I became saturated with it, and after nine years' absence from Carmel, here where the sea has lost its blueness (on account of the rivers), I find myself still haunted by memories of the intense sapphire, the "shoaling jade" and turquoise. I think I'll enclose a sea-poem (in a way) rather than the one I've mentioned. So here it is.

The first eight stanzas of Mr. Sterling's first selection follow:

THE SWIMMERS.

We were eight fishers of the western sea,
  Who sailed our craft beside a barren land,
  Where harsh with pines the herdless mountains stand
    And lonely beaches be.

There no man dwells, and ships go seldom past;
  Yet sometimes there we lift our keels ashore,
  To rest in safety 'mid the broken roar
    And mist of surges vast.

One strand we know, remote from all the rest,
  For north and south the cliffs are high and steep,
  Whose naked leagues of rock repel the deep,
    Insurgent from the west.

Tawny it lies, untrodden e'er by man,
  Save when from storm we sought its narrow rift,
  To beach our craft and light a fire of drift,
    And sleep till day began.

Along its sands no flower nor bird has home.
  Abrupt its breast girt by no splendour save
  The whorled and poising emeralf of the wave
    And scarves of rustling foam—

A place of solemn beauty; yet we swore,
  By all the ocean stars' unhasting flight,
  To seek no refuge for another night
    Upon that haunted shore.

That year a sombre autumn held the earth.
  At dawn we sailed from out our village bay;
  We sang; a taut wind leapt along the day;
    The sea-birds mocked our mirth.

South-west we flew, like arrows to a mark;
  Ere set of sun the coast was far to lee,
  Where thundered over by the white hooved sea
    The reefs lie gaunt and dark.

Many, many of George Sterling's poems hold and charm us, but lack of space compels us to resist the temptation of reproducing them.

(*To be continued.*)

SOME MODERN VERSES AND A GREAT POET.*

THE title poem of *Sublunary* is in blank verse, and leaves the impression that it should have been a great deal stronger than it is. A haunting picture might have been called up, a picture with the weird possibilities of enchantments. That the ordinary human mind should question impatiently as to any meaning in it is of no consequence, but it is significant that even to the visionary this poem conveys no images of subtle hidden truth. The line, "And in the great world's streets thin cats and ghosts trod the transparent shadows," betrays a limited imagination relying upon adjectives for an effect. One is only moved to laughter at the thought of "fat cats and ghosts," and "transparent shadows" contradicts the earlier line of "moon without shadows streaming wan." Not thus would the regal imagination of Coleridge have conjured up his visions, nor would Browning with his imperative insistence on common things, by which he startled and demanded attention, have thus weakly adjectived his meaning. Did the author really see through the mind's eye, or did she only unduly force a fleeting idea? A note of uncertainty runs through nearly all the poems. *Twelve Chimes upon the Clock* holds out a promise that fades all too quickly. *The Siege* is underlyingly poetic but sadly marred by the last unmetrical line, "The sweeping battalions of adversity," which drops heavily into prose, being overweighted with an extra syllable. *Tempest* is one of the most poetic in the volume, and *At Martin-Eglise* the most appealing.

* * * *

Bitter Herbs, by C. A. Dawson-Scott, contains an entirely different style of verse. The poems deal for the most part with that alluring snare for poets and novelists, illicit love. Eleven out of the thirteen poems that compose "Part one" have this meretricious interest as their motive. *Marguerite outside Hell* is red-hot with the fires of so-called "love," and it is original in its utter disregard of the Marguerite of Faust. So fiery is it that one is compelled to wonder how, after these passionate avowals, the lady can complain that she cannot enter Hell, because "sword and flame forbid me, innocent."

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* *Sublunary*, by Nancy Cunard (Hodder and Stoughton); *Bitter Herbs*, by C. A. Dawson-Scott (William Heinemann); *Selected Poems*, by Francis Coutts (John Lane); *Common Epiphany*, by Allen Brockington (Erskine Macdonald); *Milton Agonistes*, by E. H. Visiak (A. M. Philpot).

The fierce retort of Rawdon Crawley to Becky Sharp's claim comes to mind—" You innocent !—Innocent by ——!" One feels a little sorry for Faust if this is the real Marguerite, but, all the same, the verses have a certain power. *The Sixth Day* is a poignant outburst against the cruelty of mankind.

" All them sheep, hundreds and hundreds,
And yet they couldn't spare 'ee one . . .
For sheep is property.
'Twould ha' paid parson,
An' our bairn . . . oh, lad, lad,
Right or wrong side the blanket,
What's the odds ? "

In this poem, and also in *Merry Begot*, sweep the tides of human sorrow and the winds of the desolate moors. In *Black and Red* (although the story is almost wearisomely old) the lines " The oblong of the open door, The mute black oblong of the door," reveal the artist. Indeed, there are numerous lines which could be culled from the poems that are beautiful and picture-making, and they are unusual. The pity is that the author has limited the Muse by the themes ; bitter herbs can be gathered in wider and more noble pastures than in the fields of mere wanton infidelity. The power that is revealed in some of these poems should be harnessed to a finer motive.

* * * *

Of Francis Coutt's large volume, *Selected Poems*, it is harder to speak, for in these days of furious hurry and stress it is to be feared that very few will devote the needful time to absorb the long classical poem of *Psyche*, or the Arthurian ones of *Uther Pendragon* and *The Death of Lancelot*, however beautiful they may be, and *Psyche* has many exquisite pictures, and in *The Death of Launcelot* the pacing of the funeral horses and the ghostlike mourners, with the encasing of the dead Queen " in thirty fold of ceréd cloth of Raines, with Orient balms," are the words and fancies of a true poet. Poems also to remember are *The Man Child*, *Peace*, and *Memories*, and the lines in praise of the sea—

" O chiming monotonous change !
O changeless melodious beat !
O refluent rhythmical range
Of fairy invisible feet ! "

(to quote only four lines)—should rank high for the music of their melody. Mr. Francis Coutts seems to have dreamed his dreams in

the pillared fane where the mighty poets of the past lie sleeping; perhaps if he trod in spirit more often on the grimy roads of to-day it might arouse a stronger living touch in his poems, but, at the same time, the cleanness of his themes and the dignity of his lines make him welcome to those who fly to poetry as to "something holier than ourselves"; and for him "the High Priest prophesies from the steps of the altar."

* * * *

Common Epiphany, by Allen Brockington, is a remarkable book. It does not attain to the beauty of the author's *The Nazarene*, but it is even more original. It resembles more nearly a novel in verse—although, at times, so prose-like are the lines that they hardly seem verse. Take the following, and, leaving out the capitals, it reads as prose—"Bernard received a letter the same night—expressed to his hotel, from Mary Phelps, the letter stated her address and said, 'If you wish to see me, come at once.' He was not shocked, perhaps not even surprised"—and yet, in spite of many lines as prosaic as these, the book is finely poetic in its insight into the Spirit of Christ still moving amongst common ordinary men and sordid events. The episode of Ben Brooks released from prison, and his wife, Betty, is instinct with poetry, and strikes a profound note in spiritual insight. The rhymed interludes are beautiful, more especially *Mother and Son* and *Father and Daughter*. Fred Perrin, the "leading fool"—"A fool (in this sense) is a living soul

> Who trusts in God for guidance, not by signs,
> And not by standards, nor by principles,
> But by the inspiration of the moment."

—is a most lovable creation, and reveals a spiritual cognisance that is entirely Mr. Brockington's own. If the book at a first reading a little repels, and the names and complications of relationship bewilder, it well repays a second and third reading; indeed, it is only after a second reading that the full power and the large-hearted intuition of the author becomes strikingly manifest. It is like an old mediæval town that—narrow crooked streets, evil smells and all—looks beautiful when seen beneath the kindly rosy sunshine of the westering sun.

> "He showed in homely ways how God controlled
> The courses we call evil."

* * * *

"Eyeless in Gaza, at the Mill with slaves." It is thus in his own words that the picture of Milton during his declining years rises before us. In his *Samson Agonistes* we see the strong defeated but not conquered, and it is as *Milton Agonistes* that Mr. E. H. Visiak

has written greatly of a great man. His all-too-slender volume will be necessary in the future to all students and lovers of England's magnificent Poet and yet more magnificent Man. In these days of books published in their hundreds, and (one devoutly trusts) more than half of which are to perish in the limbo of forgotten and disregarded things, *Milton Agonistes* stands prominent, a strong piece of work.

Blake said of Milton " that he wrote in fetters when he wrote of God and Angels, but in freedom of Devils and Hell," and Mr. Visiak has, from the basis of psychology, set out to expound this titanic figure of the poet on somewhat the same hypothesis. He points out that from the sub-conscious self of Coleridge arose those child-like visions of beauty, the foundation and environment of which are peace and contentment. Milton's arose from the tragic forces of his life, his was " a soul driven by despair beyond despair," and his sub-conscious self indominantly wrested from the agony of Evil the harvest of Good. And what a picture does Mr. Visiak draw of this splendidly isolated and mis-comprehended soul! The lofty benevolent tenderness of the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, written immediately after the mortification of his wife's desertion, is in itself an indication of a mind far advanced beyond the times, and the noble serenity of his behaviour during the downfall and destruction of his ideals and hopes for his country, and of his hero, Cromwell, equally point to a soul uplifted above the common aspirations and able to meet defeat, blindness, desertion, the daily galling of petty minds, and remain unconquered. That he wrote of his opponents sometimes scurrilously in reply to yet baser scurrility is but that, as Mr. Visiak points out, he used " the polemical usage of the period." Blake died triumphant, singing unknown hymns of victory over the cruel circumstances of his life; Milton, a stronger soul, passed in the utter serenity of Sleep into Eternity. Death is, verily, a mighty revealer of the sub-conscious self.

Amid all his illumination with regard to Milton, Mr. Visiak has, we venture to think, stumbled somewhat over that stone of offence, Puritanism. The Puritan was not of necessity a " kill-joy " any more than that all Romish Priests must prove immoral, or all Anglican dignitaries subservient. The true Puritan is one who has no use for meretricious and artificial aids to happiness, he is one who follows single-heartedly the sanctification of all human things; in this sense Abraham Lincoln was a Puritan and Milton could not be other than one. The poet in Mr. Visiak is up in arms at once against the traditional Puritan, but that is a small thing in the debt we owe him for his book, *Milton Agonistes*.

ARTHUR HOOD.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

HERE we have a piled-up mass of prizeworthy poems, twenty-two of which can only be classed as excellent ; and this is to leave out of account two lovely things from Honor F. Leeke and others from last issue's prizewinners. Hesitantly, I divide the prize between two landscapes :

LA PAZ (TENERIFFE). By Barbara E. Smythe

Fair garden of contentment and repose,
Where time may pause for colour-redolent hours,
And the bright air is drenched with scent of flowers,
While far below the eternal ocean flows ;
O, I will bring to you my poor, dead dreams,
Lay them away among the flowered spaces
And rest awhile mid these fair, silent places,
Where brooding peace aye dwells and no time seems.
White, gleaming house, there sleeping through the years,
Haunted by peace from some dim yesterday,
Above my head, the passion-flowers sway
And magic winds stir through the pampas spears.
Peace of all gardens, wonder of all seas
Dwell here, and grateful do I rest with these.

ADYAR. By E. Barrington Smyth

Here never through the slumbrous heat
Eddies the roar of crowded street ;
No brazen gongs of Siva boom
And echo in this quiet room. . . .
The torpid stream meanders on :
Blue, green and gold, a halcyon
(Bird of delight) skims idly by.
Floats upward to the painted sky
A drowsy monotone, the hum
Of folk at ferryside. A drum
Beats, sadly patient, in the trees.
Palmyras murmur as the breeze
Caresses them. Beside the stream
A horseman canters in a dream
Towards the blood-red death of Day. . . .
And after, comes the shadow-play
That wakes the broad verandahs when
Night brings the flow of cars and men.

Soon in the gilt electric glare
Flit human silhouettes. A pair
Of screech-owls nesting in the roof
Make raucous mock of them. Aloof
Two lovers sit, and talk of all
The dear, same things that never pall,
Nor heed the band's seductive tunes.
And all the while, bell-skirted peons,
With drinks of gold and ruby sheen,
Glide through the maze of chairs between
Verandah steps and portico.
The dancers turn : throbbing and slow
The music swells and fades again. . . .
A jackal, wailing, heralds rain.
Swiftly Night passes, passes. Soon
The laughter dies. . . . The crescent moon
Shines on an empty colonnade.
Void lies the stage : the masque is played.

We welcome this poem from India. Out of the remainder, we can select only six for book prizes. Well, what could be finer than this :

AN EPITAPH. By William MacDermott

Yet doth her beauty illume
With its witchery
As of old all my gloom :
Like the light of a star
Whose white ashes are
Lost in eternity.

Or more courtly than this :

AT A DANCE. By " C. L." (J. W. G. Heaven, Clifton)

Deirdre, she has yellow hair,
Her eyes are blue, her face is fair.

Deirdre, when she goes in green,
Most like a daffodil is seen ;

While Deirdre's face is like the rose
In June that on the hedge-tree grows.

Deirdre, therefore, holds in her
Spring and summer, as I aver.

Or sincerer than this :

UNFULFILMENT. By A. Doris L. Wilson

Not death I fear, nor the decay of age,
Nor recantation of the sins I willed,
When last my eyes must fail to see the sun,
But lest, when journeys end, no hopes assuage
My shame that I must leave this work undone
And say to Him Who made me " Unfulfilled."

The fourth must go to Miss Siola Hawker for her *Charm Unbreakable ;* the fifth to Emilie F. Ford for *Defiance* (though *To My Watch* is almost equally attractive) ; and the sixth to P. J. O'Connor Duffy for his *Blackbird* and *The Fisherman*, the last two lines of which read :

An' the brown hills smile at you, like a lass
Leanin' over a half-door.

The remaining really excellent poems come from Cyril G. Taylor, A. J. B., Edith M. Johnes, Brian Woods, Marie Hichens, F. A. Carter, S. Marguerite Goode, I. M. Old, Miss N. J. Kessler, Evelyn D. Bangay, and the author (who is it, please ?) of *The Jester*. Entries must be signed with full name and address. But there is another big pile, almost equally good, marred only by the smallest faults, from Evelyn Fraser Fitch (*Flamingoes* and the *Vampire*), " H. Ross," Kathleen M. Cook, Lilian M. Lewis, C. Curryer, I. M. Rogers, Margaret Hume, Irene Petch, Rose E. Speight, " M. D.," Irene Bell, B. B. Horton, Blanche Jones, Eleanor B. Simeon, Janet Atkinson, " Ann Yaranton," I. M. Stenning, Margaret Ormiston, Michael Mullin, Anne W. Gough, " Philomel," and Violet le Maistre.

I do not admit that I deserve it, but will print this time, in place of the usual sermon, the following vigorous outburst from Marion Allison, who assuredly must have a future before her :

THE THEORIST. By Marion Allison

And while you talk and jabber aimlessly,
I do.
'Tis action I am after—not so you.
You are content
Prosily to expound and theorise ;
You would as lief just blindly shut your eyes
When practice puts your theory out of joint ;

I see no point
In all this argument.

That is not poetry, of course, but the companion poem about Pippin's Walk certainly is ; and the *Theorist* itself has a freedom and freshness which is very welcome.

O. C. DE C. E.

THE REVIVAL OF THE SONNET

ANOTHER BARTLETT PRIZE.

$75 FOR A CITY SONNET: SOME WORDS ABOUT SONNET FORM.

THE Bartlett Sea Sonnet Competition is closed and the entries are being examined by an independent Board of Adjudicators. So much practical interest has been taken in this competition that without waiting for the result we have pleasure in announcing that fifty dollars are offered by our Associate Editor and twenty-five dollars from other sources as premiums for the best City Sonnets—poems in sonnet form (about which we add some remarks below) descriptive of the individuality, soul and charm of any town, a wide interpretation being given to the term " city," which may be taken to embrace one's home town, however insignificant, as well as the big capital cities of the world. Fabled places, however, are not admissible subjects—one's city of dreams must have a solid foundation. All entries must be addressed as before to Mrs. Bartlett, in envelopes endorsed " City Sonnet " in top left-hand corner, and all competitors must be members of the Poetry Society or registered annual postal subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW. A special Board of Adjudicators will be formed, and all entries must remain at the disposal of the Editor until one month following the publication of the awards. The closing date will be announced in our next issue. As MSS. submitted in competition cannot be returned, contributors should keep a copy of their poems. All competitors will have an equal chance of securing an award, and the Adjudicators' Report will include a roll of Masters of the Sonnet compiled from the entries received in these two competitions.

Following on the Sea Sonnet announcement a noted writer revived the old controversy regarding which is the correct sonnet form by asking Mrs. Bartlett whether it would be permissible to enter three sonnets on the sea, one following the original form followed in the thirteenth century by Guiltone or the form perfected by Petrarch two centuries later and generally used since, or the Elizabethan form used by many present-day poets, but always challenged by literary jurists.

Consulting a number of poets and literary authorities, Mrs. Bartlett found that while there is general agreement that no liberties can be permitted as to the arrangement of the first eight lines of the sonnet, and many hold that the Petrarchan form is the only correct form for the sestet, many modern poets object strenuously that being confined to only four rhymes for the entire fourteen lines of the sonnet, as provided by the Petrarchan form, is too restrictive and difficult to do justice to the *motif* treated.

More freedom is asked for the sestet which, under strict Petrarchan rules, followed by Milton, Wordsworth and other notable poets, should consist of six lines of equal length, as in Wordsworth's *The World*, which has stood and still stands as one of the best models of Petrarchan form :—

"The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything we are out of tune ;
It moves us not. Great God ! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

Purists have protested to Mrs. Bartlett against allowing in the contest for the Bartlett Prize any deviations from this form ; while others would allow three rhymes for the sestet, and some would allow the sestet to end with a couplet, but there is a general objection against permitting the sestet to consist of three couplets.

Among the leading present-day sonneteers, including such a master of form as George Sterling, the tendency seems to be to change of form variously with mood and subject, Clement Wood in his *Eagle Sonnets* and Edna St. Vincent Millay and Lizette W. Reese using various forms other than the pure Petrarchan. A comprehensive idea of what other masters have done may be gained from Harrap's admirable *Golden Book of English Sonnets*.

To avoid loss of effort and time on the part of careless verse

writers who label their verses " sonnets " without taking the trouble of studying the sonnet form, Mrs. Bartlett makes clear that—

" No fourteen-line poem consisting of three quatrains and a couplet can be accepted as a sonnet.

" Since the controversy regarding the correct sonnet form is over five hundred years old, and Spenser, Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Browning, and most of the leading American poets of the past generation all diverged from the strict Petrarchan form, it can hardly be expected that a general agreement will be reached now to follow this standard exclusively, but there are basic rules governing the sonnet, and the first rule is that the first eight lines shall be a colourful, well-knitted octave limited to two rhymes."

As the primary object of THE POETRY REVIEW is the promotion of an intelligent appreciation of poetry, the reader must not be entirely neglected for the producer, and we are therefore setting aside five dollars for the encouragement of a symposium on the twenty best published sonnets descriptive of city life and features, of which Wordsworth's *Westminster Bridge* is the outstanding example and must be barred from the list of the best twenty city sonnets we invite readers to send in to the London office of THE POETRY REVIEW.

WILLIAM MORRIS ON THE SONNET.

Writing in *The Academy* of May 14th, 1870, on the new poems of Rossetti (who is again coming into his own), William Morris speaks of " the magnificent collection of sonnets at the end of this volume, which, though there are some among upwards of eighty that are not free from obscurity, the besetting vice of sonnets, are nevertheless unexampled in the English language since Shakespeare's for depth of thought, and skill and felicity of execution." He continues : " A mediocre sonnet is more hateful to gods and men than any other versified mediocrity, a crabbed one is harder to read than any other form of crabbed verse ; and complete success is not common even when the thought is not over-deep ; but to express some deep piece of thought or feeling completely and with beauty in the narrow limits of fourteen lines, and in such a way that no line should be useless or barren of some reflex of the main idea ; to leave the due impression of the whole thought on the mind by the weight and beauty of the ending ; and to do all this without losing simplicity, without affectation of any kind, and with exquisite choiceness of diction and rhyme, is as surely a very great achievement, and among the things most worth doing, as it is exceedingly rare to find done."

"IN PRAISE OF ——" AWARDS.

These competitions aroused considerable interest and discussion, but it was disappointing to find they were not used to any great extent as an incentive to research into place literature by young people. Quite naturally Bath provided the greatest scope for competitors in both sections, and we give in full the discriminating report of the Adjudicator (Dr. Charles Whitby), whose general comments apply equally to all the competitions :—

(*a*) Of the original poems sent in, one is *hors de concours*, having been previously published in connection with a local competition, where it was bracketed as first with another poem. Of those that remain it has been far from easy to decide which are the most deserving, for there is none to which one can give unqualified praise, while it perversely happened that some of those which show the highest qualities are also those marred by the worst flaws. It is a pity that writers who obviously know better so often allow slipshod work to pass, and so just fail of true distinction and beauty. Poetic feeling is only half the battle : there must be perfection of form also to constitute poetry.

In my opinion the best—that is, the most successful—poem submitted is Miss K. M. Cook's sonnet, *The Queen of the West*, to which I award the first prize of half a guinea ; the second to be divided between Miss P. O'Donnell and Miss Gladys Singers-Bigger. There is nothing very striking or ambitious in Miss Cook's conception ; one feels that she loves the old city, and she just sings of its beauty and charm in simple melodious lines which give the effect of sincerity and spontaneity. Miss O'Donnell's *The Eagle Glass* is a more colourful poem, but is deficient in the matter of form : one really cannot rhyme "reflects" with "regrets"! Miss Singers-Bigger in *The Measure of Aspiration* is, as always, original and thoughtful, but this sonnet, associating the geometrical figures of Bate's groundplan (very striking in photographs taken from the air) with the work of Adelard, a twelfth-century Baconian who translated Euclid, seems to owe more to ingenuity than imagination. It ends finely. Mrs. Margaret S. Dangerfield scores a *proxime accessit* with her vigorous lines *In Praise of Bath*. Lady Peirse's stanzas are graceful, and make effective use of the oft-celebrated bounty of the lights of Bath, "reflections they in seeming of constellations high." Miss Bessie Hawkins, Mr. W. W. Herd, and Mr. W. H. Morrison also deserve commendation ; the poem sent by the first-named is particularly melodious.

(*b*) Turning now to the selections, I have decided that the prize shall be divided between Miss E. Moon, who sends ten excellent

literary excerpts, and Miss Anne W. Gough, who sends no less than thirty-eight, many well known, a few valuable as well as unfamiliar. Mr. H. L. Whiting sends an article embodying a good many quotations, but this is not quite what we wanted.

The Brighton batch were a very mixed bag. Considering the reputation of Sussex in verse, we expected some better original poems descriptive of the Brighton area, both front and back. There was scope for light *vers de société* and glowing downland lines. The prize in this section is divided between Miss Gertrude Pitt (London), the Rev. J. Walker Brown (Brighton), C. D. Watson (London), and B. B. Fletcher (Sheffield). By far the best selection in the *b* section was contributed by Mr. Frank Deeley (Brighton), who showed wide acquaintance with the literature of the district.

The charm of Bournemouth inspired many original poems, but evidently the town has no literature, has inspired no poet or novelist of an earlier generation. The *a* prize is divided between F. M. Hobbs, E. Kenrick, Margaret Dangerfield and Gertrude Pitt, who in combination present a vivid picture of the district. E. M. Walker and R. L. Bendall deserve commendation for their picturesque descriptions of Evergreen Valley and the Pinelands of Wessex respectively.

No award can be made in the case of Eastbourne. The best set of verses came from Scarborough.

NOTES: REPORTS: ANNOUNCEMENTS:

HAMPSTEAD.

The Committee of the Hampstead Centre invites members and their friends to an At Home on Saturday, September 29th, from 7.30 to 10 o'clock, at 150, Finchley Road, N.W.3 (by kind permission of Miss Julie Huntsman). Tea and coffee will be provided and a short musical and dramatic entertainment will be given. The following programme has been arranged for the Autumn Session :—

October 2nd : Egypt.

October 16th : *Retaliation*, *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*, by Oliver Goldsmith.

November 6th : Members' Special Meeting.

November 20th : John Donne.

December 4th : *The Queen of China*, by Edward Shanks.

December 18th : Historical Characters.

The meetings are held at Miss Julie Huntsman's Studios, 150, Finchley Road, N.W.3, commencing at 7.45 p.m. Further informa-

tion respecting the work of the Centre can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. F. Tilly, 32, Camden Square, N.W.1 (telephone, North 709).

CHELSEA CENTRE.

The Autumn meetings of the Chelsea Centre will begin on October 9th, when Mr. H. G. Barnaby will give a paper on "Mental Poetry," and on November 13th Mr. Lewis Hind has promised to speak on Alice Meynell.

CHELMSFORD CENTRE.

A public meeting will be held in Chelmsford on Wednesday, October 31st, when the Lady Margaret Sackville will read a paper "On Speaking Verse." Further particulars may be obtained from Mr. Bernard Martin, the Hon. Secretary of the Poetry Society in Chelmsford, the Church House, Chelmsford.

KENSINGTON CENTRE.

The summer session of the Kensington Centre has been very successful and well attended. Mr. Ashton-Jonson's delightful *Children and Music* has already been noticed; Miss Rolt-Wheeler gave a very thoughtful and provocative address, "Without and Within"; the Rev. A. J. Young (who has published several volumes of verse) was very witty and original in his views on "Present-day Poets." The general meeting for reading poems or extracts relating to Love lacked somewhat in force and fire; a good original poem was read by the authoress, Mrs. Mark Robinson. On June 21st the President read a play, *Niccolo d'Este*, by Arthur Hood, a play of distinctive poetic quality and great beauty. On July 4th Sir Nevile Wilkinson opened on "Poetry for Children and of Children," and Mrs. Minshall read many poems with much charm. A very special note of thanks must be given to the owners of beautiful houses who have extended a most cordial hospitality to the Society, and to the older members who still continue to receive most kindly.

October 4th.—Society Debate, "What is the Value of Poetry in Life?" 4, Cranley Place.

October 18th.—Mr. E. H. Visiak, "Milton Agonistes," 7, The Boltons, S.W.

November 1st.—Mr. E. Heron-Allen, "Discussion on Persian Poetry," 73, Onslow Square, S.W.

November 15th.—Mr. Stanley Cooper, F.R.S.C., "The Tercentenary of a Famous Book," 5, Roland House, S.W.

November 29th.—Mrs. Menda Gibson, *Flowers of the Wilderness*, 27, Campden House Court, W.8.

December 13th.—Play Reading, Flecker's *Hassan*, 16, Devonshire Place, W.

CHILDREN AND POETRY.

Major Sir Nevile Wilkinson, K.C.V.O., F.S.A., Ulster King of Arms, in his delightful address to the Kensington Centre on " Poetry for Little People," made a particular plea for the dynamic value of fairies, saying that while as an old Guardsman he had been brought up to destroy life he was learning now to conserve and construct it, and as the designer and builder of Titania's Palace he was making the little people contribute to the happiness of human children. On his main theme Sir Nevile said, according to *The Times Educational Supplement*, that those who had even in the most modest way tried to influence the thoughts and actions of children knew what a great responsibility was theirs—

> " For children, in Creation, are
> The only things that could be given
> Back, and alive, unchanged, to Heaven."

But while the mind of a child was hallowed ground, on which an angel might well fear to tread, children were quick to detect the chaff among the good grain and would keep themselves free from the taint of any grossness that might unwittingly have crept into the fancies placed before them.

Those who wrote for the younger branch of the family of children would find that they fell easily into two errors : they mounted like airmen into heights where the mind's eye of a child could not follow them, and perhaps into clouds in which they got lost themselves. Then, again, they forgot the natural outdoor robustness of the healthy child's mind, and laid too much stress on the creation of a kind of scented hothouse atmosphere which could not but injure those hardy little plants which must battle with the keen airs of nature. The spirit which illuminated poetry written for children must be robust, more especially when written for those of tender years : robust and hopeful, pointing to wonderful deeds to be done and sights to be seen in the great world before them.

The omission of the fanciful, or, as one might express it, the unproven, from the literature of childhood was little less than a crime ; and to deprive a child of the opportunity or desire of forging the key which would open the gate into the enchanted forest

beyond might lead to a sentence of lifelong imprisonment within the four drab walls of a workaday life. We should not bar the gates of fairyland against children, but rather let the fairies draw the opening bud tenderly upwards to the warm rays of truth.

More care might be taken to distinguish poetry *for* little people, and poetry *about* little people. There was also a third division : poetry *by* little people. Every child should be encouraged not only to love poetry, but to collect for grosser minds some of the iridescence of that starlight through which he or she passed into the dawn of life. As the tiniest bud hides in its calyx the faint remembrance of a thousand springtimes, so in the heart of a child there must be some rosy mists caught up from those clouds of glory from which the little life emerged.

We should guard children's birthright of fancy jealously, and by early training in the love of poetry give them the key of fairyland, so that in the years to come they might hear the horns of elfland faintly blowing, and pass out of the door of life to a land where

> " every sound and every sight
> Means more than sight or sound elsewhere ;
> Each twilight star a two-fold light ;
> Each rose a double redness there."

We have been asked to deal with the Oxford Recitations, but if space allowed we would rather recognise the work of many devoted teachers and others to whom " the art of speaking verse " is no new thing and without whose pioneer work the Oxford experiment would not have been possible. According to the astute advance publicity agent who invited the modern Athenians to listen to a new thing, Mr. John Masefield discovered some beautiful voices in Scotland. Some of us have long been delighted with beautiful voices, intelligently used in the vocal interpretation of poetry, in Sheffield and Bristol and Newcastle and elsewhere in the neglected English provinces, and even in London where " elocution " is despised only by those who do not know what elocution is and where speech-training is a highly developed art with an important bearing on physical and mental education. The moaning of men and the wailing of women at Oxford perhaps indicated more mistaken individual conceptions of how to give a beautiful expression to a beautiful impression than demonstrated the effect of successful training on persons capable of the rarest of all accomplishments, and the judges varied in their views of what effect should be produced. The

standard of one appeared to be severe restraint, while another seemed to encourage abandonment to emotional feeling. The conclusion to be drawn was the entirely perverse one that the reading or semi-reading of poetry is infinitely preferable to the recitation of it.

Of many letters of appreciation and encouragement relative to recent developments of THE POETRY REVIEW that have reached us a letter from Mr. Henry Woodhouse, a director and vice-president of the Aerial League of America, of which Admiral Peary is president, is typical. Mr. Woodhouse writes :—

" Permit me to congratulate you on the most interesting May-June number of THE POETRY REVIEW. I have congratulated Mrs. Bartlett for the American Section, which is really the very best literary presentation of outstanding features in the poetry world I have ever read.

" Such an admirable presentation of substantial facts and developments will not fail, I believe, to make poetry popular among people in public life and in the business world who do not have time or inclination to go through reams of printed pages of uninteresting chatter to seek an expression that will satisfy the mind trained to discard looseness of thought as well as looseness of action.

" From my experience in writing for the national magazines and my knowledge of magazine publishing in general I feel safe in prophesying that POETRY REVIEW will have a large increase of subscriptions and advertising during the coming twelve months."

It is gratifying to know that a Yorkshire subscriber thinks " everyone who cares for poetry wishes to further its cause, and I am sure the organ of the Poetry Society must contribute tremendously to that end ; it is so sane and well balanced, and in identifying itself with the young writers gives encouragement where it is most needed."

The usual general premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued, and six books will be awarded to the " highly commended."

Not more than *two* poems may be submitted at the same time.

If criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. and a stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed. (If a more detailed postal criticism is desired, 5s. and a stamped addressed envelope should be sent.)

Entries must be either typewritten or written in ink on one side of

the paper only, and contributors must be members of the Poetry Society or registered postal subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW.

All MSS. submitted for premium awards should be addressed to "The Premium Editor," and should reach this office *not later than* October 1st. Entries cannot be returned, but they must remain at the disposal of the Editor (whether awarded a premium or not) until after the issue of the next number of THE POETRY REVIEW, in which the award will be published, and they may be published in THE POETRY REVIEW or elsewhere at the Editor's option.

POETRY OF TO-DAY
A LIST OF NEW BOOKS

TITLE.	AUTHOR.	PUBLISHER.	PRICE. s.	d.
The Principles of English Metre	Egerton Smith, M.A.	Oxford Univ. Press ..	12	6
Collected Poems	Vachel Lindsay ..	Macmillan	12	6
Minor Melodies	J. M. Stuart-Young ..	Cecil Palmer	10	6
Children of Ayra	Claudine Currey ..	Grant Richards ..	10	0
The Authorship of Julius Cæsar	Wm. Wells	Routledge	7	6
Collected Poems	Rita Frances Mosscockle	Burns & Oates	7	6
Eurhythm : Thought in Action	H. H. Hulbert, M.A., M.R.C.S.	Novello	7	0
Wind in the Pines	Victor Starbuck ..	Yale Univ. Press (Humphrey Milford) ..	6	6
Dryden's Heroic Plays	B. J. Pendlebury, M.A.	Selwyn & Blount ..	6	0
The Speaking of English Verse ..	Elsie Fogerty	Dent	6	0
The Art of Poetry	William Paton Ker ..	Clarendon Press ..	6	0
Poems on Legendary and Historical Subjects	Chas. H. Pritchard ..	Stockwell	5	0
Atabualpa	Hugh MacNab ..	Selwyn & Blount ..	5	0
Poems	Lady Margaret Sackville	Allen & Unwin	5	0
Shoes of the Wind	Hilda Conkling ..	Harrap	5	0
Real Fairies	Enid Blyton	Saville	3	6
The Three Boughs	Clarice M. Covell ..	Merton Press	2	6
Pilgrimage	Margaret Sanders ..	Hugh Egerton & Co. ..	2	6
Green Broom	Florence H. Darwin ..	Heffer	1	6
Paul of Tarsus	Douglas J. Boyle ..	The Author	1	0
Who Buys My Dreams? ..	J. M. Stuart-Young ..	Cecil Palmer	—	
Dawn in the Woods	Marion Price	Village Bookshop, Highgate	—	

BOOKS IN THE ABOVE LIST; *in fact*, BOOKS REVIEWED OR ADVERTISED ANYWHERE *can be obtained through any of the 1,000 Branches of* W. H. SMITH & SON, *Head Office:* STRAND HOUSE, LONDON, W.C.2

SEA SONNET

WE have forgot, who in safe cities dwell,
The waters that a labouring planet bore
Forgot to trace in their primeval lore
Great shapeless epochs fluted to a shell.
Their old chaotic voices chronicle
The first confusion, and the dark, before
The first adventurer with spear and oar
Towards the unknown pushed out his coracle.

Yet to the requiem of a dying earth,
When man has passed, his fever and his pride,
Still shall the constellations find a grave
In that Pacific whence the moon had birth,
And still the moon shall heap the desolate tide
Beneath the night's unchanging architrave.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

OCEAN

THE rivers of the years find rest in thee,
And thou hast drunk our ages one by one ;
All loves and hates, all earthly things begun
Are ended so and merged eternally.
The past has yielded everything, and we
Who labour now shall yield what we have done ;
Thou scatterest the ashes of the Sun,
But Him thou givest back at dawn, O Sea.

Long after men have perished from the earth
Still will he sink at evening to thy breast
Where death itself is but his own reflection.
To whom thou slayest, thou shalt give rebirth ;
Thy lover in the gardens of the west,
Thy child eluding thee in resurrection.

ROBERT HILLYER.

THE SEA

TO every child born by the ocean shore,
And nurtured near the mighty cradle-hymn
Sung by the surges sweeping from the rim
Of sky and billow where the sea-birds soar,
There lives a haunting music in the roar
Of breakers, in the cloudy tempest grim,
That, through all life until his eyes grow dim,
Can be lost or forgotten nevermore.
For even his own blood that ebbs and flows
Is but the reddened brine, now prisoned apart,
From Ocean's ancient breast ; each thing that grows
Hides deep within its nature the old smart
Of salt sea spray, and every wind that blows
The eternal rhythm of that great mother-heart !

H. L. ENO.

THE OCEAN

O SEA, thy vastness doth satisfy the soul,
Out of thy solitude strong thought is born :
Your roads are free, though times they're tempest torn,
They lead to liberty, your child their goal.
Men know the land, they've ranged from pole to pole,
And built, but here they're fugitive, forlorn,
Ships come and go—the same sea flogs Cape Horn.
As mighty streams are merged in one great whole,
In one vast ocean with room for all to dwell,
So Nations rise as daughters of the Ocean
In which they sound the depths of their devotion,
Thus Britain rose, and thus our Nelson fell,
To guide us all to feel the silent spell,
Fuse sea and song as one within a shell.

CARLYON BELLAIRS.

THE SEA-MOTHER

I HAVE come back to the great heaving sea,
Who long ago mothered my earliest birth ;
She is again enough for eyes to see,
Stretched to the all that I may know of earth.
Beneath the envious wheeling of the sky
Her endless oily swell of rolling wonder
Forever nears, divides, and whispers by,—
The face alone, with what a vast heart under !

And I have seen her heart stirred into passion,
The very deep assail the scattering gray,
Lifting its mighty arms against the ashen
Clouds, that in terror break and scud away ;
And I have known whence comes, out of my warm
Complacency, the heaven-assailing storm !

CLEMENT WOOD.

THE SEA

THE secret places of the earth still hold
Stray, broken fragments of romance for me ;
Still sounds, as from the land of faerie,
The haunting cadence of the songs of old.
Yet soon they pass—fair maids and warriors bold
And great lost gods—for earth has grown to be
Too full of knowledge ; but the virgin sea
Receives them to its caverns manifold.

Only the ships of men, daring the deeps,
Break, like enchanted monsters, through the waves
Where Aphrodite sighs for Adon's pale
Lost hands ; and where great Odin wassail keeps
In new Valhallas ; and where Arthur's brave
Follow the moon-streaked pathway to the Grail.

H. ROSS WILLIAMSON.

TO THE SEA

HERE on these muddy flats the leaden tide
Crawls in reluctant : by the sweltering pier
A dingy lighter drifts : and far and near
Man's puny life the sombre skies deride,
Low'ring. Ah ! fool to linger, satisfied
To earn a dull and drudging pittance here,
When even now the first faint ebb is clear,
And freshening rivulets at the old quay-side.

Oh ! with what might of music will they roll,
These waters, quickened by the wind and sun,
And carolling to their fellow, " We are free."
So, when the cramped and sordid hours have run,
Back to the living splendour of thy soul,
Call thy lost children, oh ! thou eternal sea !

CHARLES G. MORTIMER.

THE SEA

HER beauty lies beyond the lands we know,
Making a wonder of familiar things ;
Sea-spirit, haunting face, and voice that sings,
—Those of her calling cannot choose but go !
Like an enchantress, with her fire aglow,
She burns the sunset in a spell, that brings
Wild souls into subjection ; her great wings
Are pale, swift clouds, through which the dawn-winds blow.

Sad, patient women watch men lured away
By her, their strongest, oldest enemy.
Although her face with deep despair is grey
A witch's murmur says, " I make you free."
And lo ! She keeps her own till Judgment Day !
Who can withstand the Spirit of the Sea ?

VERA I. ARLETT.

THE OLD SAILOR SPEAKS

LET'S talk of neither ships nor seas to-night ;
For from the harbour-mouth the buoy's din
Sounds loud and near. The fog comes rolling in,
And all the world is shrouded now in white.
The ocean winds are roaring in their might ;
The loons' shrill cries are wavering and thin ;
They speak of death, and all my kith and kin
Are laid on shell-strewn biers, far out of sight.

No one should tell sea-tales except by day,
When waves are blue and all the sky is fair—
The sun-path sparkles gold, a joyous way,
With curling foam-crests flying here and there.
Then sail your ship, alert and free and gay,—
And when the fog shuts down, lift hands in prayer.

CORALIE HOWARD HAMAN.

THE SEA

FOREVER changeless and yet full of change,
A vast expanse of beryl and of blue,
A mellow mingling of the old and new,
A great voice chanting anthems sweet and strange ;
Who has not known the sorrow of the sea
And seen its tears, like jewels, tossed on the sand,
Or heard wild waves, receding from the strand,
Laugh with a hollow haunting harmony ?

For æons it has sung, until it seems
A lyric link between the yesterday
And void to-morrows when man may fulfill
The words of Him that fell like living beams
Of light on earth's dim doubt and dark dismay,—
Who whispered to the waters, " Peace, be still ! "

ELIZABETH SCOLLARD.

SEA CALL

MY soul would lift up anchor as a sail
Grown restive for the open, vermeil seas.
O come, O haste, thou quickening, vital breeze,
Bewitch me ere my sudden courage fail.
Languorous are the days, becalmed the hours.
My senses sleep, as though within a tomb,
When only nightshade grows and ganga-bloom.
Unfold, O sails, as the impregnate flowers!
The wide sea haunts me to its naked breast
As anchored ships are haunted from their quays.
The wide sea haunts me without leave or rest
From Boreal zones to the Antipodes,
'Til I lie white and strangled on the crest
Or deep-drowned in the briny mysteries!

GUSTAV DAVIDSON.

THE MYSTIC TO THE OCEAN

I LOVE you, love with passion throned as deep
As your unglimmering midmost shrines may be;
With eagle thoughts that span your foaming sweep
Of sapphire glory do I love you, sea!
In you I live, sharing the vital strength
That tingles to each tiniest cove and bay;
I breathe with you through all your breadth and length,—
You whom no sun can parch, no frost can slay,
Free to the air, my limbs exult in change,
While, as with you, deep calm pervades my soul;
With your mad rapture I can leap and range,
Yet never break the bonds of strict control.
As of your billows in the flush of morn,
Of me—ah, God!—is golden beauty born.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK.

THE BARTLETT SEA-SONNET CONTEST

THE ADJUDICATORS' AWARD.

OVER eight hundred sonnets were entered in the Sea-Sonnet Contest for the premium of fifty dollars offered by Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, Editor of the American Section of THE POETRY REVIEW. They came from all parts of the world—about five hundred from the United States, close to two hundred from England, eight from Scotland, six from France, and from one to six each from Wales, Canada, Belgium, Holland, New Zealand, Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, India, Straits Settlements, Nigeria, West Coast of Africa, South Africa, Guadeloupe, and China. New York State produced seventy-two entries and California sixty-five; Massachusetts came next with forty-eight and Ohio followed with twenty-nine. All the other States were represented.

In the final consideration in voting upon the twenty-five best entries, seven received votes, and of the seven the sonnets by Miss V. Sackville-West (Long Barn, Sevenoaks, England) and Robert Hillyer (Pomfret, Conn., U.S.A.) tied for first place with three first votes and one second choice vote each.

The judge who cast the final vote in favour of Miss Sackville-West characterised her treatment of the subject as "cosmic," and favoured her sonnet specifically on that account. The judge who cast the vote that made Mr. Hillyer level remarked that ". . . It has thought and one good image, and is technically sound."

The contributors of the twenty-five best entries were Vera L. Arlett, Joseph Auslander, Commander Bellairs, Henry Bellaman, Robert Crawford, Gustav Davidson, Babette Deutsch, H. L. Eno, Muriel E. Graham, Hazel Hall, Coralie Howard Haman, Robert Hillyer, H. Knight-Eaton, William Law, Martia Leonard, P. L. MacHale,

Roselle Mercier Montgomery, H. Ross, Charles G. Mortimer, V. Sackville-West, Elizabeth Scollard, Mary St. John, Charles Wharton Stork, Clement Wood, J. M. Stuart-Young.

The members of the Board of Adjudicators did not know the names of the authors of the sonnets, as the sonnets had been copied without the names, and there was nothing to indicate the identity of the authors.

They were judged by a Board of Adjudicators of twelve members as follows: Edwin Markham, William Seaver Woods, Editor of the *Literary Digest*; Glenn Frank, Editor, and Carl Van Dorn, Poetry Editor, of the *Century Magazine*; Miss Elizabeth Cutting, Editor of *North American Review*; Oswald Villard, Editor, and John Macy, Literary Editor, of the *Nation;* Harold T. Pulsifer, Editor of the *Outlook*; Professor John Erskine, Columbia University; Rear-Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, formerly Chief of Operation of the U.S. Navy; and another high authority on naval and scientific matters whose name is withheld from publication on request, with Galloway Kyle, Editor of The Poetry Review, and Alice Hunt Bartlett, American Editor of The Review and giver of the Sea-Sonnet Prize. The Review's Editors alone knew the names of the authors at the time they cast their vote. In the case of Mrs. Bartlett she cast her vote before the other judges cast theirs, and her selection was not known to the other judges when they voted.

Rear-Admiral Bradley A. Fiske and the other high authority on naval matters (whose name is withheld from publication on request) judged the sonnets from a scientific standpoint.

Many of the entries received commendation, and would have been prize-worthy if the topic had been sea romance or sea adventures or sea sentiment or descriptive contrast of the respective attractions of the sea and land. The authors used the sea as a setting and treated their subject in a commendable way.

Over one-third of the sonnets submitted were above the average, and about one hundred were sonnets of merit from

every standpoint. We publish a selection of the reserved sonnets which deal with their subject from different standpoints.

The Editors are very well pleased with the attention and care given by the large, important, and independent expert committee, who recognise the important work THE POETRY REVIEW is doing, and see how necessary it is to emphasise the forms that have stood the tests of time—an emphasis, one of our American colleagues points out, " we have never had to any extent in this country. It is my belief that the younger leading poets of America, who are very resourceful, can as easily write correctly, as to form, as they write incorrectly now, if they consider it important ! "

CITY SONNETS:

TWENTY GUINEAS ($100) IN PREMIUMS.

The announcement of the second Bartlett Prize has made so wide an appeal and the scope of the subject is so fascinating and full of possibilities that our Associate Editor's offer of fifty dollars for a City Sonnet has now been increased to $100 or twenty guineas as premiums (one major award and several minor or regional awards at the discretion of the Adjudicators) for the best City Sonnets,—poems in sonnet form (about which we add some remarks below) descriptive of the individuality, soul and charm of any town, a wide interpretation being given to the term " city," which may be taken to embrace one's home town, however apparently insignificant, as well as the big capital cities of the world—Glastonbury or Chicago, Leeds or New Orleans, Winnipeg or Rome, Ypres or Canton. Fabled places, however, are not admissible subjects—one's city of dreams must have a solid foundation.

All entries must be addressed as before to Mrs. Bartlett (27, West 67th Street, New York, U.S.A.) in envelopes endorsed " City Sonnet " in top left-hand corner, and all competitors must be members of the Poetry Society or registered annual postal subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW.

A special Board of Adjudicators will be formed and will include as technical experts men who know the world's cities. All entries must remain at the disposal of the Editor until one month following the publication of the awards.

The closing date will be March 31st, to enable entries to be received from contributors in any part of the world (as we write the directions a subscription comes in from Samoa and another from Honolulu). As MSS. submitted in competition cannot be returned, contributors should keep a copy of their poems. All competitors will have an equal chance of securing an award, and the Adjudicators' Report will include a roll of Masters of the Sonnet compiled from the entries received in these two competitions.

Attention is drawn to the remarks on the sonnet form in the September-October issue of THE POETRY REVIEW.

As the primary object of THE POETRY REVIEW is the promotion of an intelligent appreciation of poetry, the reader must not be entirely neglected for the producer, and we are therefore setting aside five dollars for the encouragement of a symposium on the twenty best published sonnets descriptive of city life and features, of which Wordsworth's *Westminster Bridge* is the outstanding example and must be barred from the list of the best twenty city sonnets we invite readers to send in to the London office of THE POETRY REVIEW.

FROM THE CLASS-ROOM

GIVE me the wild moorland,
With God's blue sky above,
And give me a van for the roadway,
For such is the life I love.

Give me the open country,
With the driving rain, or sun.
A van for the winding roadway,
And my life will have begun.

Why encase me in this building ?
Why encompass me with books ?
There's shelter in the forests,
There's music in the brooks.

Why force on me a foreign tongue,
When in the woods I've heard
Those little, noiseless, moving sounds—
And the song of every bird ?

D. A. RUSSELL GREGG.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A SYSTEM OF SCANSION OF ENGLISH

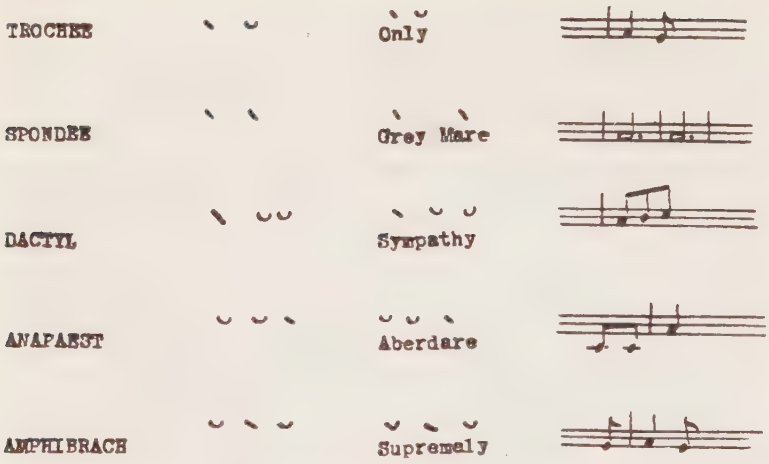
IT has long been the diversion of the student of literature to cut up verse into slices, much as the botanist dissects flowers; and it has had this advantage, that while a botanist is unable to reconstruct the mangled tissues, the logotomist *can* lay down guiding rules for the creation of kindred works. He shares, moreover, with the scientist, the delights of classification, and gloats equally with him over strange singularity and generic resemblance.

But where the scientist is content to research and register his results and conclusions, the literary man evolves a *technique:* these things have been done in this manner by the best people; they must always be done in this manner —much as if the scientist were to lay down rules for the Author of Being to follow on the next occasion on which He designs a new world.

No doubt, too, such a world would be a very fair attempt, especially if the scientist were to provide as many safety-valves as does the prosodist in his system of poem-synthesis. For even our rigid prosodists have found it necessary to admit such conceptions as the *hiatus*, the *caesura*, the *di-brach*, the *tri-brach* and the *feminine ending*. This done, they turn a blind eye—the Nelson touch—to the clamant fact that the imposition of a classical quantity-scansion on the English language was a fundamental mistake. They have this excuse—that the imitation of certain classical metres, substituting the English stress for the classical quantity, the English pulse for the classical foot, has panned out very well.

My first feeling, when the train of thought was started which led to this paper, was that there were not enough of these *feet*—to adopt the prosodist's term for his units of speech. Let us enumerate the chief of them:

IAMB ˘ ´ Alone,



So we call a line of five iambs an *iambic pentameter*, and say that a sonnet consists of fourteen iambic pentameters arranged in a particular way. Very often, these iambic pentameters do not altogether belie their name: Fitzgerald writes

> I *some*times *think* that *ne*ver *blows* so *red*
> The *rose* as *where* some *bu*ried *Cae*sar *bled*,

but he changes the pulse slightly in the very next line. This is how Richard Le Gallienne can treat the line:

> Un*less you come* while *still* the world is *green*,
> A *place* of *birds* and the *blue*, *dream*ing *sea*,
> In *vain* has *all* the *sing*ing *sum*mer *been*,
> Un*less you come* and *share* it all with *me*.

Beautiful, five-pulsed, decasyllabic lines, but only one of them—if intelligently read—a true iambic pentameter. But the prosodist does not agree. Miss Ford, in her *Versecraft*, for instance, gives this astonishing model of an iambic line: God's *proph*et *of* the *beautiful* . . . !

Let us say at once that the iambic pentameter is a splendid skeleton to model on, but the little graces and adornments come from a sturdy independence of the model. It is a starved poetry that shows its ribs.

And what a nonsensical system of scansion it is, wherein the following quotation from *Back to Methuselah* could be scanned either as dactylic or anapaestic, and in either case leave one stress representing a whole foot!

ECRASIA: *Oh* for a *breeze* from the *hills!*
STREPHON: Or the *wind* from the *sea* at the *turn* of the *tide!*

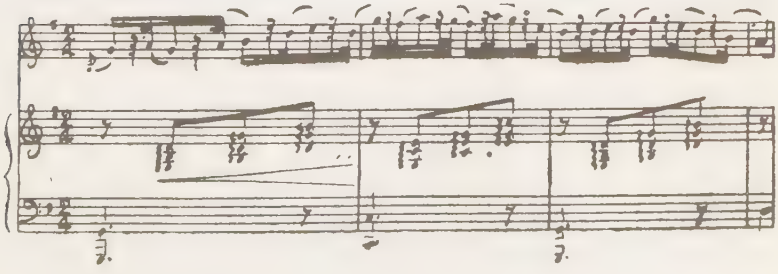
Here is another quotation from the same fine work, which the old system would refuse to scan at all:

SERPENT: When you and Adam *talk*, I hear you say *Why?* —*al*ways *Why?* You *see* things; and you say *Why?* But *I dream* things that never *were;* and *I* say Why *not?*

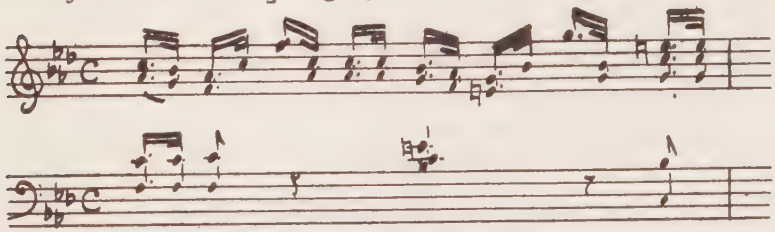
Now poetry occurs in prose, just as in verse. The old system claims to scan verse; it does not even pretend to scan poetry lying outside that category; therefore, even if its claim could be upheld, it is pathetically incomplete.

II

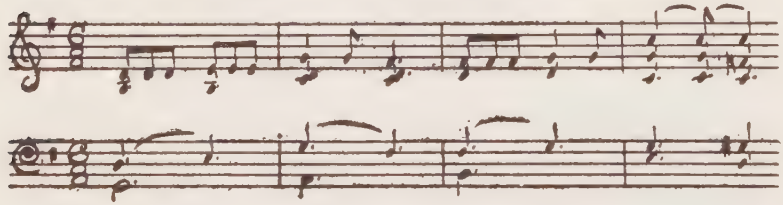
It is shown in the table of *feet*, that for each foot we may use two mnemonics: one a word, the other a musical form. We have music composed of these musical forms quite as truly as a quotation from Shakespeare is made up of iambs. "Off to Philadelphia" illustrates the iamb in a manner not likely to be forgotten. So does Anton Dvorák's *Humoreske*, though here the iambs are modified by a slur:



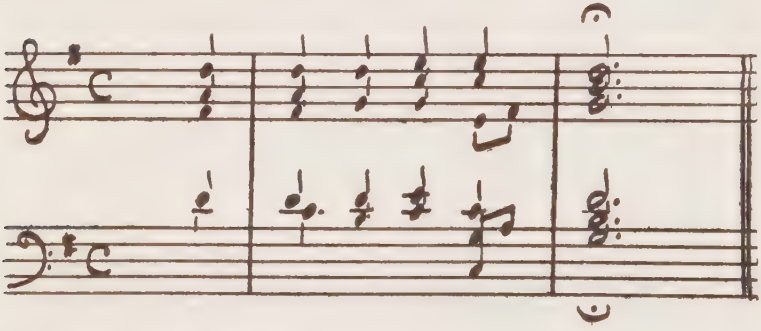
To illustrate the trochee, here is a line from Handel's *Surely He hath borne our griefs:*



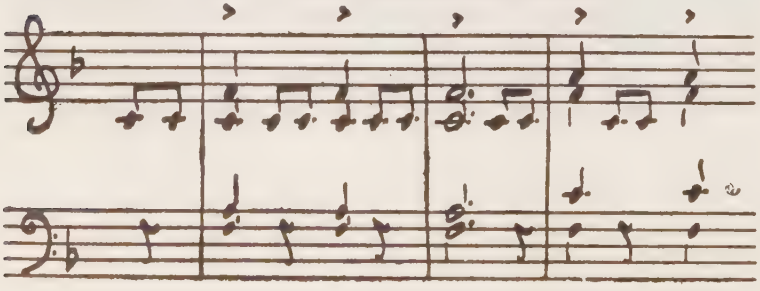
For the dactyl I have taken a line from Edward German's setting of Kipling's *Pussy can sit by the fire and sing.*



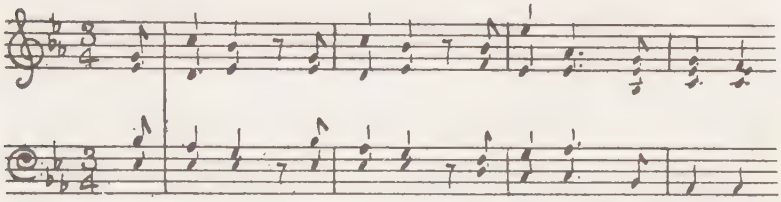
The English spondee, both in language and music, as I show later, is an idea rather than a fact, but in the following quotation from *Let all men praise the Lord* in Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* we get very near the spondee:



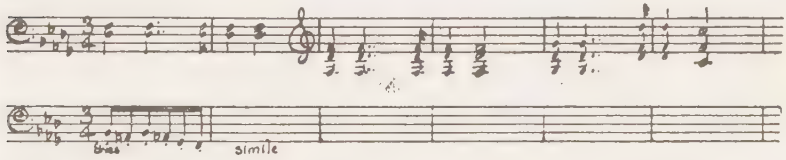
The anapaest opens this vigorous old march:



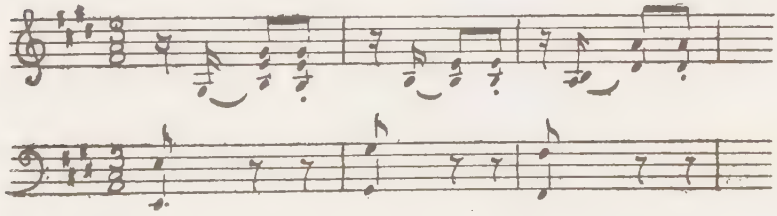
And Elgar's *As Torrents in Summer* opens with four amphibrachs :



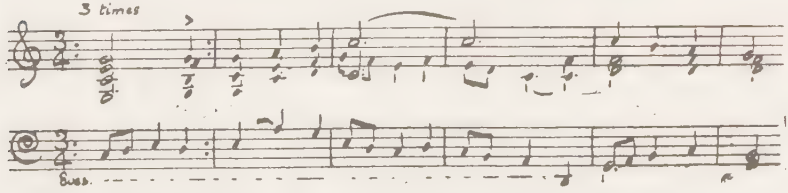
But we have a multitude of musical phrases besides these. Take a very common one, the metrical equivalent of which I have previously called the *Spondaic Trochee*. This example occurs on page 7 of *King Olaf*.



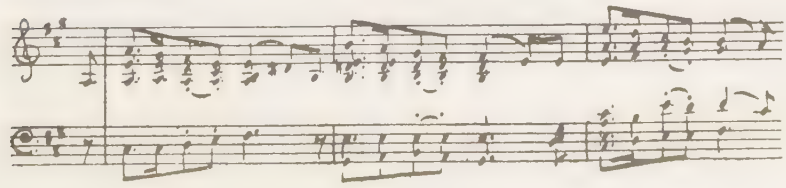
A second example is found, among many other places, in Mendelssohn's *Lieder*, No. 36 :



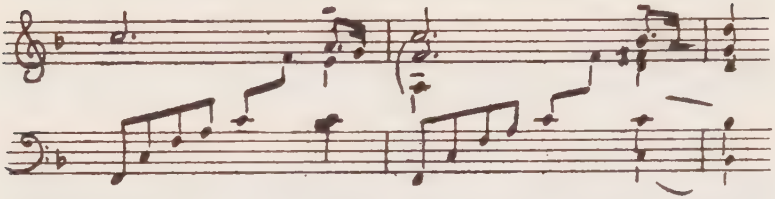
and in Elgar's *King Olaf's prows at Nidaros*:



We notice in No. 16 of the *Lieder* this phrase, consecutively twice repeated :



and in the first two bars on p. 24 of *King Olaf* this :



We find the use of a triplet with the second note stressed in *Lied 6* ; and Chopin, in the *Sonate, Op.* 35, the *piu lento* movement, stresses the third. And these are no mere sporadic examples. The tale of musical phrases has no end.

Each of them may be found in speech ! Here is an instance. Gertrude Ford gives this as an example of trochaic metre :

(*There's*a) (*wo*man) (*like* a) (*dew*-drop),
(*She's* so) (*pu*rer) (*than* the) (*pu*rest).

But the natural division into units would scan it like this —if, indeed, the words are worth scansion at all—

(There's a *wo*man) (like a *dew*-drop),
(She's so *pu*rer) (than the *pu*rest).

Chesterton has used this unit :

I am silent at the Club,
I am silent at the pub.,
I am silent on a bally peak in Darien.
For I stuff away for life
Shoving peas in with a knife
Because I am, at heart, a vegetarian.

And it is, of course, the fundamental basis of *Locksley Hall*, too.

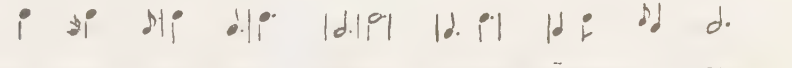
It is useless to say that this unit is an anapaest with a feminine ending. Why not say it is an amphibrach with a feminine beginning ? After all, what is an anapaest itself but an iamb with a feminine beginning ? Let us not name it ; if, as I claim, all these musical arrangements are paralleled in speech, we cannot saddle ourselves (ye gods,

what a metaphor !) with an infinite number of metrical feet any more than we can divide music into a few exclusive phrases. We divide our musical score into *bars*. That is how I propose that we should scan our language. As for these wretched little strokes and semicircles, we should not be limited by them any more than the child who can count as far as twelve should confine his activities to the numbers one and two. Duration is important as well as accentuation; there are varieties of accentuation; there are pauses to be considered. What more simple than to use musical notes ? It is quite immaterial whether we adopt the Staff notation (without the stave) or the *Tonic sol-fa*. I say without the stave because, though this would be useful to indicate intonation, that does not properly form part of the scansion.

Let me indicate one or two reasons why this would be a great improvement in interpretation—and I say interpretation advisedly.

1. The old system gives us only one form, the *iamb*, for a stressed syllable following a non-stressed syllable; the new gives us a very great number. That is as it should be, for there are a great number of *iambs;* they lie, as the mathematicians would say, between two *limits*, a stressed single note and the spondee. In the spondee, a fiction, the stresses are equal; as soon as the first note takes the major stress we have trochees, and these continue to the limit again—a single stress. This is illustrated in the figure, and it may be illustrated by the reader himself in the progression of the following expressions of appreciation:

Kyou : 'n*kyou :* Thank *you : Thank you : Thank* you : *Thank*y : *Thanks.*



It will be perceived at once that the spondee is merely the boundary line, in speech, between an infinite number of iambs and as many trochees. Even the old Latins, though their quantities were not necessarily stresses, were

often guilty of slipping in a trochee where their prosody required a Latin spondee.

2. The anapaest is acknowledged in this scansion, as in actual English practice, to be merely a split iamb ; and the dactyl, a split trochee. Also, the new arrangement enables us to split the heavy syllable too, if we will ; or on the contrary, to tie up the whole foot into one note, as always actually happens in English verse when a non-iambic poem ends on a stressed syllable. The latter is not a *masculine ending !* It is merely a tied-up foot, a *tied note.*

3. Pause—and even *tempo*—can be indicated.

4. Just as all other feet reduce as a rule in practice to iamb and trochee, so these reduce, by carrying the tying-up process a stage further, to the single beat. The new system gives the *pulse* of the measure; we shall always find it by looking for the bar-line.

5. While the bar-line indicates that a strong stress immediately follows, we have less accentuated stresses in other parts of the bar according to the musical form. The present system wrongly conceives all stresses as uniform.

III

It is strange that we should recognise any essential difference between music and speech. It is quite unscientific ; and it is contrary to experience, for most of us have had at least one friend in our lives whose voice has been actually appreciated as music to the ear. Every simple sound is a musical note. There is a confusion of sound which is painful ; but if a man distress us by sitting down suddenly on the keyboard of a piano, it does not follow that the piano is the less a musical instrument, or that any of the wires are not sounding truly and melodiously according to their nature. Listen to the fall of these eight pieces of wood ! . . . That is a *noise.* But now, as I let them fall in order of their length, they give the notes of the octave. They are tuned to Key C. Play a little tune in F with them, and you will notice that when you get to B—and play the natural, as you must, instead of the flat

required—the error will jar on you quite as much as when the young hopeful next door worries through his Czerny.

Are our voices less musical than these pieces of wood ? Then if, as I contend, verse is written to be spoken aloud or to regale the sense with *auditory* images, let us scan it as the music that it is.

IV

Now what is the implication of all this ? It is that every hymn-tune writer, every song composer, is scanning his subject according to this musical method, which is therefore, in a sense, not new at all. That is often true. It took a musician, for example, to scan *The long day closes ;* but often, alas, it is equally incorrect, and it is in these cases, because the libretto has never been scanned in this manner, that the results are unconvincing.

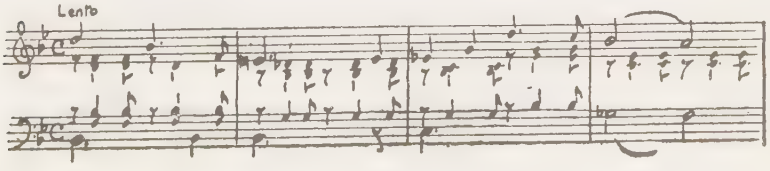
Take those noble words :

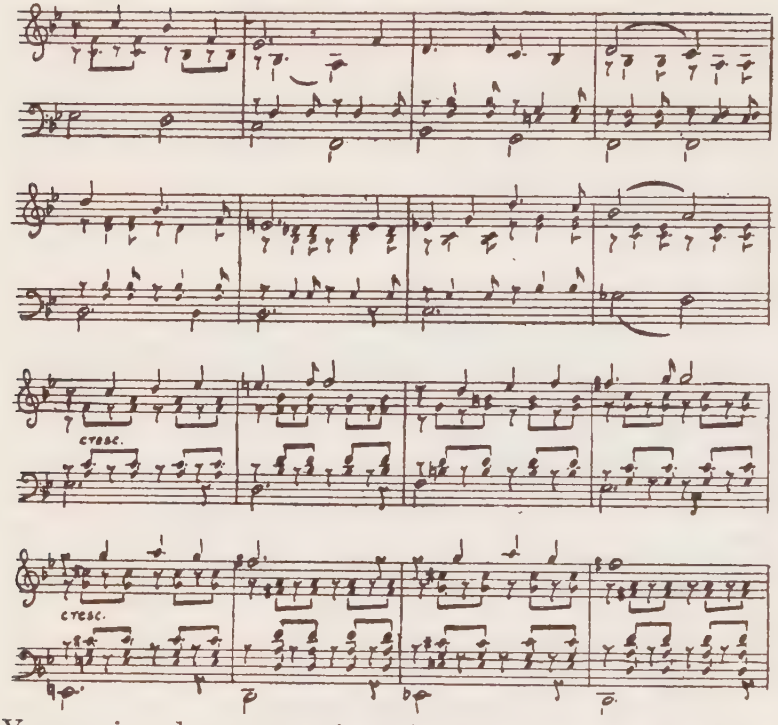
> Swift to its close ebbs out Life's little day ;
> Earth's joys grow dim ; its glories pass away.
> Change and decay in all around I see :
> O Thou Who changest not
> O Thou Who changest not
> Abide with me ;
> Abide with me !

And how do we sing them ?

> O Thou Who changest,
> Not abide with me.

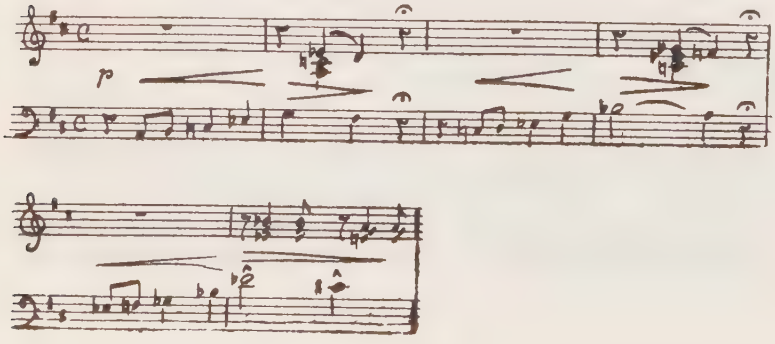
But how would it be treated by a composer who really *felt* it ?—I hope something like this :





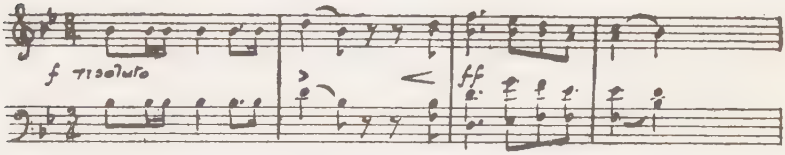
You notice the syncopation, the right accentuation, the poignancy of the ending on the mediant rather than on the tonic ? That is *scanned*. It has been given a melody, too, but over and above that, it has been scanned.

But that music is from the intermezzo *Portia* in Rosse's *Merchant of Venice*—for a pulsing measure will suggest words just as words inspire melody in a composer. In the overture to the same piece there occurs this passage :



Now that is exactly like the triple call of a wife: *Will you come to tea, dear?* The third call suggests smothered exasperation. But in *The sea hath its pearls* we have conscious scansion:

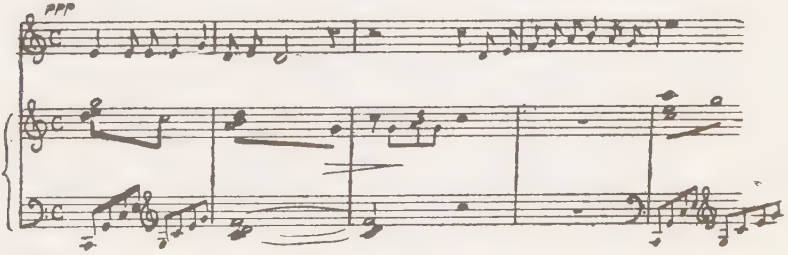
"Great are the sea and the heavens, but greater is my heart."



And in Landon Ronald's beautiful song,

"Down in the valley something stirred . . .
It was only the note of a bird"

is really scanned.



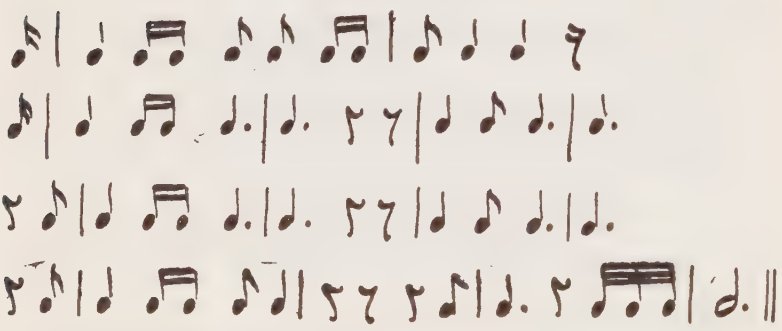
A perfect example of the kind is found in the "Letter-Song" in *Sybil*.

V

Now I have been accused of wishing to turn sonnets into sonatas and the columns of the Sunday papers into recitatives. Perish the thought! I do not suggest that when we scan a line we should write a melody for it. I am quite content if you will allow me bar-lines to show the stresses, rests and pauses, and the usual notes of music to show the length of time that should be given to saying a word. Let me scan one or two sentences to show the method.

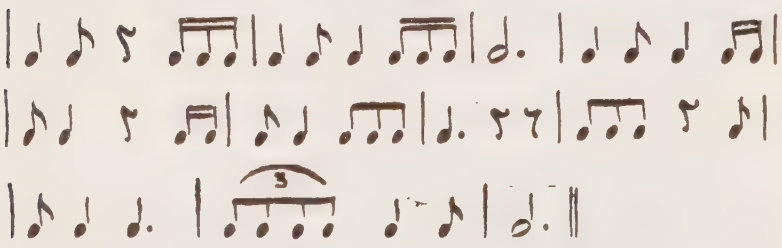
This charming little poem appeared in *Punch* for October 5th, 1921 :

> If *I* were a *sca*bious in the *Au*tumn *grass*,
> I'd *see* with a *blue stare*, *lovely things pass ;*
> I'd *see* in a *green ring*, *Fai*ry *feet whirl*—
> If *I* were a *sca*bious—and *not* a little *girl.*



And this is from Walt Whitman (I do not know if Walt Whitman has ever before been scanned) :

> *Sure*ly, whoever *speaks* to *me* in the right *voice*,
> *Him* or *her* I will *fol*low ;
> As the *wa*ter *fol*lows the *moon*,
> *Si*lently, with *flu*id *steps*,
> *Ev*erywhere a*round* the *globe.*



I claim, then, for this system the following advantages. The poet can, if he wish, in the first place, register a classic and authentic interpretation of his own work. In the absence of his authority—or in spite of it—the scansion interprets the reader's own conception of the thought.

One reader will scan it to bring out some beauty which he is the first to discover, just as an actor will sometimes reveal a hitherto totally unrealised possibility in the rendering of a line of Shakespeare. An actor can write to his understudy—or to the newspapers—the only true and perfect rendering of such and such a line. Indeed, the only disadvantage apparent is the possibility that we shall have a new set of Correspondence Colleges, each with its watertight method of teaching Elocution!

OLIVER C. DE C. ELLIS.

A POSTSCRIPT IN CRITICISM

I AM expected to notice several recently published volumes* of associated interest, but which reached me after the foregoing essay was written. The book by Professor Ker, lately and for all too short a time holder of the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, is a collection of seven charming essays, so naturally, so personally expressed that the reader feels that he is really overhearing an armchair chat. Here is a supreme critic lost to the world. What waste!

Egerton Smith is Professor of English at Krishnagar. This is a very different book, a learned treatise, an invaluable work of reference. Mr. Smith is no pedant. Though at first he "thought that a formula might be stated which would cover the whole range of modern English verse," it was "soon evident that no such simple formula was possible, that metrists have assumed a degree of homogeneity which

* *The Principles of English Metre*, by Egerton Smith; Oxford University Press.

The Art of Poetry, by William Paton Ker; Clarendon Press, Oxford.

The Writing and Reading of Verse, by C. E. Andrews; D. Appleton and Co.

An Introduction to Poetry, by J. B. Hubbell and J. O. Beaty; Macmillan.

A History of German Versification, by H. G. Atkins; Methuen.

The Speaking of English Verse, by Elsie Fogerty; Dent.

Who Buys My Dreams, by J. M. Stuart-Young; Cecil Palmer.

Minor Melodies, by J. M. Stuart-Young; Cecil Palmer.

The Writing and Reading of Verse, by C. E. Andrews; Appleton.

The Principles of English Versification, by P. F. Baum; Harvard University Press.

The Measures of the Poets, by M. A. Bayfield; Cambridge University Press.

English Verse Composition, by Roberts and Pratt; Arnold.

is not actually found, that there was more complexity than their generalisations would lead one to expect, that there is an underlying law, but something at once less rigid and more comprehensive than any they had yet stated." His attitude is that though " light may be thrown on the subject by music, phonetics and experimental psychology, . . . metrical law is not identical with, or even merely part of, either phonetic or musical law." He tilts at Hatton's setting of *To Anthea*, but only concludes that this composer's scansion would not be applicable to " speech-verse." One agrees ; but when he writes that " Lines like ' Brought death into the world and all our woe ' would, if they were formulated musically, have to show many changes of time-signature," one can only feel that he has lightly made a most unjustified assumption which could easily have been disproved by trial. It is perhaps hardly fair to pick on this one thing, however, in a book so entirely the production of profound cogitation and careful reference.

Miss Fogerty's book, too, is sincere, challenging, cultivated, sound. As another reviewer has written, " Both as a (*sic*) historian and a practical guide, Miss Fogerty proves as interesting as she is competent." Here again is the fruit of long and painstaking digging, acknowledged —as such things should be—by two pages of thanks. One paragraph of her introduction should be widely quoted and used : " Many people are not at all ashamed to say, ' Oh, well, of course, I don't understand poetry and all that sort of thing ; it does not appeal to me.' Some people are colour-blind ; many are tone-deaf ; some few cannot trace the meaning of a printed page. Yet none of these people go about boasting of their deficiencies ; they are a little sorrowful, a little ashamed, and one has to cheer them up ; often they try every means, however costly, to cure themselves. Some people in the same way are rhythm-deaf, but the majority of those who do not love poetry are the victims of bad teaching." Miss Fogerty justifies the application of elocution to the vocal interpretation of poetry and expects an intelligent understanding of poetry and metrical values to be an essential equipment of the speaker of verse. She has the courage to draw on a number of competent authorities and to confess her debt to them.

Messrs. Hubbell and Beaty's book is well named. American in origin, it has a valuable detachment. It is quite good as an instructor of young poets, and it contains an admirable anthology.

Roberts and Pratt is a text-book very suitable for the junior form of schools. The exercises are good and novel. The authors suffer from the old delusion that the antonym of prose is poetry.

Mr. Bayfield's work would provide an intermediate text-book. The system of scansion which I have advocated almost invariably falls into six-time, and Mr. Bayfield contends for a trochaic base. Unlike Sidney Lanier, who made an exception on blank verse, he goes the whole hog. He may very well be right.

Mr. Baum's book has the same sound ring as its fellow-countryman; but it is surprising in a venture of this kind to find the locution "The first essential is that it have . . ." This constant omission of "should" is typical transatlantic journalese. A murrain on these continental subjunctives!

Another American book is that by Dr. Andrews, whose engaging attack and faultless English make his text-book a pleasant guide and companion. Pages like p. 51 are worth learning by heart.

It is interesting to find in all the shower of books on prosody which have reached us lately from the very fountain-heads of learning, that the old nomenclature is used solely for convenience and that a musical scansion is implicit in the entire treatment of the subject. And it would be very gratifying to the writer, were he the sole originator of such a scheme. But Dr. Kuno Meyer has used it (*Parallel German Grammar*, p. 135), and perhaps many another too, for indeed it is a relation that leaps to the eye. Some day, perhaps, it may reach our secondary schools and parochial literary societies; and in that case, my essay in this number will be justified of its fruits.

Hubbell and Beaty lean to the traditional side, but tell us that the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* was written thus: "The idea appeared to first take shape as music in the brain—some wild air." Egerton Smith uniformly uses musical notes to illustrate his scansion—and that is the main thing, though I do not agree that an English dactyl can be written as a crotchet followed by two quavers, for in that case all three syllables would have different values. Miss Fogerty not only uses the musical scansion but employs a stave for intonation, as suggested in my essay. "The ear is satisfied," she writes, "if the stresses recur at equal intervals of time, irrespective of whether they are divided by a regular number of syllables." (Yet some poets still write "mem'ry"—a mark by which to damn any verse!) And Baum?—"Burns composed with definite melodies in mind; Shelley often began with a little tune which he gradually crystallised into words; Schiller tells us that inspiration often came to him first in the form of music." And Andrews?—"Two people may hear the same watch ticking, one iambically, the other trochaically."

Stuart-Young in his preface to *Minor Melodies* quotes Ford Madox Hueffer with unreserved approval to the same effect. "He describes

how he gets a vague rhythm of some kind. I believe we all do the same thing." And following a line of quavers and dotted crotchets, he continues: "There are no words—at first! Presently a single idea presents itself—anything—it may be utter nonsense:—

I blow sweet sounds upon a flute,
For Love is far away;
Te-toot; te-toot; te-toot; te-toot; etc.

The rest follows: and the successful lyric-writer is he (or she—generally she!) who can mould the resultant chaos into Beauty and Form!"

And so we come back to Ker. What will this cautious Scot say, this canny man who affectionately upbraids his Chair as the "Siège Perilous"? He is with us. Though he first chills us by writing "Poetic melody is not the same thing as music; it is much more deeply idiomatic and national," he proceeds to speak of "these frames of verse in modern poetry." "For a thousand years," he writes, "the Art of Poetry has lived on the old forms of rhythmical verse, derived—some of them obviously, others otherwise—from the metres of Greek and Latin, *with the help of musical tunes.*" He says of Shelley: "The verse of *The Cloud* is an old tune which he had used with no ordinary want of success in *St. Irvyne;* it was a tune that had haunted him; at last it came right and true, through discipline applied to feeble, childish suggestions of melody."

He says: "I use the technical terms (here *iambic*) without prejudice, merely as labels to denote what everyone recognises." Finally, when he writes "Neither Dryden nor Pope has always the same wavelength; both of them are sometimes choppy, and in both of them you often find the short waves carried on the back of a long swell," he entirely deserts the old Prosody—which was of the Arts—and enters the country of Physics, of Sound, of Music—which is Science.

That is baldly put. Shall we say that the old prosody was a Book of the Dead, a history of Thule, a research among the tombs. The new prosody is alive and vigorously bent on investigating and registering the whole gamut of the beauties of the human voice.

O. C. DE C. E.

Title page and Index of Volume XIV will be published with the next (January-February) issue.

BLOWFLIES AND MOUTH-ORGANS

A CERTAIN rude fellow lately peregrinating in the region of the new Parnassus (though he supposed it to be Etna, being ignorant as well as rude), not content with taking notes of certain holes in the raiment of people thereabout, must needs print them (the notes, *id est*).* And the new Parnassians are naturally angry. Let it not be imagined from this that I personally have any sympathy for them. On the contrary, it seems to me that the rude fellow was right—so entirely and unquestionably right that not another word need be said about his rudeness. For a Parnassus that can be mistaken for a smoke-and-cinder-belching mountain is no haunt of Apollo's, and—holed coats should be looked to.

"When I was a young man," says Goldsmith, "being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions. But I soon gave this over, for I found that, generally, what was new was false." And if and when our so-called New Poets attain to years of discretion they will make much the same confession, provided always, as the lawyers phrase it, they have by that time any sense of honesty left. Intellectual dishonesty meantime is reduced to the bewildering formula of a "new art" picture or poem, and all the vauntings from futurist housetops are but the noisy heroics of those "Whose minds mistrust the little that they know, And fear the much they know not."

We well understand their eagerness ("being anxious to distinguish" themselves) to figure as trumpeters of the dawn of a new poetical dispensation, but why we, or anybody else intelligent enough to know better, should speak of them as New Poets is somewhat of a mystery. There

* *The New Poetry and Tradition.* A copy of this pamphlet and a companion booklet of satiric verse will be sent to any reader interested in Mr. Owlett's pungent criticism who will send three penny stamps for them to the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

are plenty of rich and expressive epithets from which to choose, without bestowing on them a title by which they are doubly miscalled ; for just as there is no new trick in their repertoire, no card up their dandy sleeves that has not long been ragged at the edges, so is it clear that they are not poets at all. If I may venture to parody a well-known line of Milton's (and be sure that, under the circumstances, he would not take it ill), New Poet is but old Bedlam Tom writ large. *N'importe !* Since courtesy costs nothing, and has no call to wait on reason, New Poet let it be.

There is only one Apollo, however, and his throne is not on Etna. It is stablished on firmer ground. Wherefore it is that the children of Vulcan fume and rage and make so many and so strange noises. They would unseat the divinity from his ancient place (else he should pipe to their dancing), for the Apollo we know, even the "Golden Apollo that through heaven wide Scatter'st the rays of light, and truth his beams," is not Apollo enough for these bobbed-haired makers of bobbed verse. They would dearly like to play the barber to the god, and—had they but the power—would cut off his head the better to clip and dye his golden locks. O Truefit, Truefit ! They would go a-gardening on Parnassus, and (such are their notions of husbandry and of a paradise lost for their regaining) sow their burs and thistles amid the fields of amaranth and asphodel.

When treating of the New Poetry one makes gallant but unavailing efforts to keep off the " Leaves of Grass." Not that one would say anything in disparagement of America's W. W., unless it be disparagement to say that he shows up very much better as a genius than as an influence (there seems to be no escaping the paronomasia). As an upstanding young poet, however, sounding his barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world (and he was frank about it, anyway), he flung off a rousing text for the hot gospellers of this freedom : " Let everything be as free as possible—there is always danger in constipation." An eloquent saying, and instinct with that good taste which is an outstanding characteristic of his disciples, our own New Poets

—in most other respects degenerate disciples. As he grew older and wiser he said many excellent things not nearly so much to their liking, such, for example, as his tribute to "The past—the infinite greatness of the past! For what is the present after all but a growth out of the past?" But the words of his more reckless youth they have swallowed whole, and found the taste of them good. Yet some things that taste quite good have unpleasant after-effects, and the swallowers of Walter's text, while they have cast out the devil of constipation, are having a plaguey time of it with the seven worse devils of diarrhœa. And one would be bound to apologise for such freedom of language on any occasion other than that of a discussion of the methods and manners of a school of poets whose ideas of the fitness of things are summed up in the precept "Let everything be as free as possible."

There is free verse and free verse, of course, and some quite charming free verse stands to the credit of a little girl named Hilda Conkling, whose *Shoes of the Wind* (Harrap) has had the dangerous honour of a review in the *Spectator*—dangerous because, on its purely literary side, the *Spectator* of to-day is not the *Spectator* our fathers knew, and even we have known; perhaps it is not necessary to say more than that. [Perhaps it would not have been necessary to say even as much but for an attempted Specdictatorship in matters poetical. And, indeed, the claims of No. 13 York Street have been reinforced by a magazine article on English blank verse, in which the *Spectator's* Editor strove to point his moral and adorn his tale by quoting, as a wonderful example of unrhymed poetry, Barnes's *Woak Hill*—actually one of the most subtly and carefully rhymed poems in our literature! The adornment was real, and the moral—the moral was pointed enough to make old Æsop talk in his sleep. . . . York Street rushes in where Wellington Street would have feared to tread!] And what had the *Spectator* to say to little Hilda? Well, after praising, like the very new *Spectator* it is, her verse form (that is to say, lack of form), it scolded the naughty child, more in sorrow than anger

no doubt, because "she will always find violets or snowdrops in the wood—never blowflies round a dead rabbit . . . Perhaps as she grows older she will dare look at the blowflies." This is one of my lyrical moments, and the *vers* shall be *libre*, out of compliment to the lady who signs the review:

O Hilda, Hilda, where are your eyes,
That you never see the fat blowflies
Swarming in their funny
Way over a putrefying bunny
In the wood ?
Child, wipe your nose
And promise to be a good
Girl in the future and look at the blows,
And instead of smelling those vulgar violets,
Hold your nose over the carcase of brer rabbit
And write a poem for the *Spectator*—
I know a wood where the blowflies blow !—
There's a line to start with child.
Now don't pluck any more of those nasty snowdrops (Ugh !)
(Are you listening, Hilda ?)
But pick the maggots out of dead rabbits,
And sing the glory—
(You won't always be young,
Therefore, child, be jubilant while you may)—
Sing the glory
Of dung.

That last word, by the way, is the latest favourite in poetastry. You will find it over and over again in all the latest volumes of the most log-rolled "poets." However, Mrs. Williams-Ellis does not *utterly* despair of the wee poetess; she seems to think that the "tendency to an undue sentimental refinement" *may* yet be overcome. At any rate, "Let us hope," she says, "that Miss Hilda Conkling, with her accomplishment and sensibility, will finally escape it." Train up a child in the way Mrs. Williams-Ellis would have it go, and when . . .

The truth is that not Apollo but Augeas is the god to whom the new school owes allegiance, and after running mentally through the savoury catalogue of its auguries of

innocence, one readily admits its right to be saluted as the Excremental School. That most ancient of the projectors encountered by Captain Lemuel Gulliver in the Grand Academy of Lagado—him of the yellow face and beard, and hands and clothes daubed over with unmentionableness—subscribed to the same poetical principles, depend upon it, and it has always struck me that if only the Captain could have endured a longer stay in the chamber (it will be remembered that he feared to give offence by holding his nose), he might have come away with a free verse poem in several fyttes. It was a favourite speculation of Sir Thomas Browne's that persons more remarkable than any whose names are blazoned on the roll of Fame have died unknown, and it is a teasing thought of ours that the beautifullest poems are the poems that somehow never get written: "Clashed cymbals from whose kiss there comes no sound."

Here let me say that I have no desire to appear unduly censorious, and will freely allow that the New Poetry is not *always* chanting the praises of Augeas and Cloacina. There are intervals, not of lucidity perhaps, but of harmless absurdity, of which it can be said that at least they add to the gaiety of nations and do not stimulate their animality. Having previously paid my own modest tribute of wonder to the futurist merry-andrews, I will merely ask the reader on this occasion to make anything he can of what next ensueth:

I had a mother-in-
Law; no other kin
Could be so kind, said
He!
She worried till the bladder
Of my figure seemed a ladder,
And would try to cancel it.
She
Would wring me on the mangle
When the hot sun's jangle——

Enough! not another line (and there are lots and lots of lines), lest the reader should suppose that *I* am trying to

wring *him* on mother-in-law's mangle—I who haven't the heart to hang up a flypaper when the hot sun's jangle brings the flies out in a tangle (be still, my trembling hand!). I warrant the reader would make neither head nor tail of the lines if he had them all. But when he is told that they compose a "Fantasia for Mouth-organ," he sees it at once —what? Why, of course! it is plain as the nose on his intelligent face! If only now the same hand would deign to give us a scherzo for the Jew's-harp! If only . . . Ah yes!

> For what a height my spirit is contending!
> 'Tis not content——

to know that Mr. Kipling has done for the banjo as well as can reasonably be expected of a poet who writes, as Mr. Lamb wrote, *for antiquity*—not content to know that the organ has its librettists in Browning and Milton, "antiquaries" too, and down, down among the dead men.

The farther I travel along this stony track the more it is borne in upon my mind that I owe an apology to Walt Whitman's ghost. The late John Burroughs, one of the great writers of his time in America, commenting on a certain "poem" (quoted recently by Alfred Noyes) by a leader of the new school, said: "These men claim to get their charter from Whitman. I do not think he would be interested enough to feel contempt for them." Nor do I.

Ho! all you apostrophisers of carrion and the blowfly, and you tumblers and fantastic toe-trippers and kettle-bangers and mouth-organists—Ho! what a fair and engaging Muse this is of yours, what a Muse to dedicate your noble lives to, what a regal and worshipful Muse!—in its grave moments obscene, in its gay moments ridiculous, a humiliation to the mind, a profanation of the soul, a harlot Muse jigging to hurdy-gurdys in the gutter, or flaunting its filthy rags on the smoking dunghill you are pleased to call your Helicon. Come up out of the puddle that is your Pierian spring, and even though you may not hope to lave your fingers in Hippocrene, there is Jordan, where Naaman dipped seven times and was clean.

In his address delivered before the Royal Society of Literature last October on "Some Characteristics of Modern Literature," Mr. Alfred Noyes framed a powerful indictment of the literary Bolshevik, and made an eloquent and moving appeal for a return generally to "those honest simplicities of thought and art which the cynical mood of the hour is obscuring to our national peril" (*R.S.L. Transactions*, New Series, vol. 3). It is a source of pride and joy to many of us that the art in which Mr. Noyes has long been a high exemplar should be further and splendidly served by him in the diverse rôles of prophet and preceptor. The great, the law-giving critic is he who is a critic by the divine right of beauty first created. Such were Wordsworth and Coleridge, and such is Alfred Noyes. It may be true that Mr. Noyes is not exactly—how shall we put it?—*persona grata* with the medicine-men of Mumbo-Jumbo (how should he be?); it may be true that a sapient criticaster has decided that "of Alfred Noyes nothing can be written in extenuation;" it may be true that in a book written by Mrs. Williams-Ellis (Our Lady of the Blowflies) the name of Alfred Noyes is cunningly introduced by way of excuse for repeating that judgment of Solomon Secundus. Add these truths together, however, and anybody but a hopeless duffer at sums will discover, if he did not know the answer before, that Alfred Noyes is an authentic poet, lineally descended from England's sweet singers of the past. For the rest, it may hearten Mr. Noyes to know that the lady *anatomist* of *poetry* glances only once, and with not a very glad eye, at Francis Thompson, Ralph Hodgson, and A. E. Housman, and never at all at Sir William Watson (who probably agrees with Swift that "If a person makes me keep my distance, the comfort is he keeps his at the same time").

But courage! In every age mankind has suffered its freak schools and coteries, and who are we that we should look for immunity where our fathers had none! Since the dreadful consequences of the Fall in the Garden have got to be borne till the crack of Doom, let us put a good face on the matter and try to believe that futurists, imagists,

vorticists, and the rest are sent into the world, as bugs and fleas are sent, in fulfilment of some purpose which is certainly inscrutable, but which may be wise and good. And though it be true that these new kinds of poets have their day, it is equally true and infinitely consoling that, having had their day, they cease to be. For in a little while Bavius will be gathered to Mævius and both to Della Crusca, and all their luminous works will have made one more nourishing meal for the hungry monster OBLIVION.

The epoch ends, the world is still.
The age has talked and worked its fill . . .
And in the after-silence sweet,
Now strifes are hushed, our ears doth meet,
Ascending pure, the bell-like fame
Of this or that down-trodden name,
Delicate spirits, pushed away
In the hot press of the noon-day.
And o'er the plain where the dead age
Did its now silent warfare wage . . .
The one or two immortal lights
Rise slowly up into the sky
To shine there everlastingly,
Like stars over the bounding hill.
The epoch ends, the world is still.

F. C. OWLETT.

"THERE ARE NO DEAD"

I MET her just when daffodils
Were swaying with the April breeze.
She had her arms heaped high with these,
While daring sunbeams kissed her hair
And stored my heart with memories.

To-day we met again. The snow
Lay like some coverlet outspread.
"And are," I sighed, "those daffies dead?"
A swift smile lit her eyes. "In Heaven
It may be April now," she said.

JOY MALDEN.

TINKER TO FARMER

MASTER of the lowland farm, tiller of easy lands,
What have you won from the flowing years by travail of brain and hands ?
Ease and respectability, and a heap of gold in a pot—
Are you content and full with these, nor envy a tinker's lot ?

You are old and set in your ways, nodding o' nights by the fire,
I am eager and questing still, young with the old desire ;
You are quiet and staid in the house, thinking on stack and store,
I have won the fame of the roads and a welcome at every door.

I pass out by the open ways through sun and shadow and squall,
Where the birds cry and the winds cry and the changing seasons call ;
Where the long hills lie bare to the sky and wild little rivers run ;
Where the restless sea-tides sing to the shore a song that is never done.

Farmer, sitting old and at ease, are you safe from the cry—
The strong call of far-off things that rings through the lonely sky ?
Lands and houses and gold are yours ; but what of that ceaseless call,
Of the heart's cry in the night-time, and the ache at the end of all ?

MONA DOUGLAS.

EPITAPH

STRANGE reader of these lines, thy days
To one who lies beneath this stone
Ere the first word be read are gone.
And though thine eyes may travel fast
Along these lichen-printed ways,
I have slept Time away ere thou hast read the last.

CYRIL G. TAYLOR.

THE BROKEN STAIR IN A NORFOLK CHURCH

A BROKEN, steep, and winding stair,
Rising beneath an archway rare,
O whither does it lead ?
You cannot mount those steps of stone,
They stand forlorn, unused, alone,
For vanished is their need.

In former times and olden days,
When holy men once trod those ways,
The stair led upward to the rood ;
And footsteps passing to and fro,
Awoke each hour a faint echo
That thoughts from earth to heaven woo'd.

The stair's now broken, but still lives
The Faith that Peace with Healing gives,
Although without its emblem there.
And thus a trustful child that prays
Whilst still on earth to see the rays
Of God's own glory, bright and fair,

Will learn to hold its Faith secure—
A Faith that life-long should endure—
When signs and symbols fade.
The stair is broken ! But to wings
Of Faith and Prayer the spirit clings,
Thus an unbroken stair is made.

CONSTANCE BATTERSEA.

NOVEMBER SUNRISE

SPED is the long November night ;
And when I draw my blind,
What grave and lovely dreams of light
The glimmering East has shrined !

The flowering days are long and fair ;
Their dawns I never see ;
'Tis gray November that doth spare
This mystic rose to me.

MURIEL E. GRAHAM.

"A CHILD OF MARY"

'TWAS just a mimic scene of Bethlehem
With children to unfold the wondrous tale
Of that first coming of the children's King.
And for the Mother of that Baby King
The choice had fallen on a little maid
All happiness and fun and merry ways.
Her childish brows and hair were bound in blue,
And in the lowly cave she sat enthroned,
St. Joseph, watchful guardian, at her side,
While kings and shepherds brought their homage rare.
Awe-struck and rapt she sat, and very still,
And as each one drew near she raised her eyes,
Then moved aside the veil, that they might gaze
In adoration on the Baby Face.
Then silently she fell again to brooding
On the mystery and the wonder at her heart.
It seemed as if her simple childhood's faith
Had reached across the ages, there to meet
The joy and pain, the rapture and the awe
Of that pure Mother Maid of Bethlehem.
The curtain falls, the mimic scene has gone,
And just a child again the little maid
Comes back to us and earth. Oh, happy childish thing
God keep you happy, innocent and pure
Through all your days most truly Mary's child.

M. C. URCH.

MARTINS

ONE evening bright
I watched the martins fly
Thro' the soft air, soaring high
On pinions light;
Hither and thither flitting, dashing,
Whirling, twittering as they fly;
Dark forms against the pale blue sky;
White breasts i' the sunlight gleaming, flashing:
Now darting downward to o'erhanging eaves
And nests half hidden amongst ivy leaves;
Soon mounting on swift wings of sapphire hue,
And chasing sunbeams in sweet fields of blue!

HENRY J. GLANVILLE.

THE CAPTIVE

EACH day, each hour, calls Duty stern
To dust a room or sweep a floor ;
To stir a pudding lest it burn,
Or grovel in the kindling-store ;
While one must dampen down one's fire
Of inspirations that aspire
Too frowardly to soar.
I dampen mine but still they yearn
And fret against me more and more,
And while grim Duty fights desire,
I do each task with rising ire,
And hear whichever way I turn
My Pegasus, poor Pegasus, a-trampling at the door.

I know the kitchen walls so white,
So red the new-washed kitchen floor,
The hot fire burning clear and bright
Should thrill my being to the core,
While gazing on their pristine glow,
To think it's I who keep them so.
But no ! It's just a bore.
I heat a girdle black as night,
And on its shining surface pour
Six golden pan-scones in a row,
And watch them brown and browner grow,
While all my soul is on the height,
And Pegasus, my Pegasus, is trampling at the door.

I trust that day will never dawn
When thorough scrubbing of a floor,
And careful baking of a scone
Is all that I'm existing for.
The meals that stretch in endless queue,
The things to make and the things to do,
So often done before ;
And Pegasus, forever gone,
Disturbs my burning thoughts no more,
But far in the Olympian blue
Scales magic heights I never knew,
While toiling here I must go on
Unstirred by fiery, fairy hoofs a-trampling at the door.

ELIZABETH FLEMING.

THE DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY—II

BY ALICE HUNT BARTLETT

ANGELA MORGAN—JOHN HALL WHEELOCK—JEANNE ROBERT FOSTER—LOUIS UNTERMEYER—PERCY STICKNEY GRANT—LILLA CABOT PERRY—ARTHUR CREW INMAN—GRACE E. HALL—HAZEL HALL.

Those readers who count themselves among the many admirers of Angela Morgan, who have wished they could meet this charming poet in hope of learning something of the secret of what the LITERARY DIGEST has characterised as "a fiery enthusiasm which warms the hearts of her readers," will welcome the following letter from this noted poet, a contribution from whom we had the privilege of publishing in the July issue of THE POETRY REVIEW:

Replying to your question, what is my favourite poem in the new book, *Because of Beauty*, may I say I think we are all agreed that every individual has many selves, and poets, presumably, are no exception to the rule. There is one self of me that prefers the poem *Water* (p. 32) to any other in the volume. Another self, or perhaps a variation of the first, likes *April Evening* best of all, and still a third —a strength-loving, storm-seeking person in me—braces itself with joining in *Hymn to December*.

These are the nature poems in the first section. From other sections I may pluck *Science or Symphony*, *The Inarticulate*, *Memories*, *To Those Who Loved Him*, *Love's Bestowal*, *The Cleaving Power* . . . as representing certain strongly defined personalities within me, each responding to a different note or chord from the great orchestra of living.

It is difficult to select any one poem that accords with all selves at once. However, if I were asked to attempt it, I believe I should say that there is a larger response in me to these three poems than to others:—*Rose Fire*, the opening poem (a sonnet), *Science or Symphony*, page 77; and *To a Tree in June*, page 2, section I. This last poem, I feel, seems to link in one expression a larger number of selves than any other in this particular volume.

But oh! I have forgotten *The Rain has Made a Curtain*, which I love as a mother loves a child. You see, I am not ashamed to confess that I am devoted to my offspring, and I know you will understand the spirit in which I am making these statements. I assure

you it is with all humility that I do thus express myself about the verses I prefer.

Enclosed I send you the new poem, the one of which I wrote you last night . . . written especially for you! I trust you will like it. With every good wish, and all happy thoughts for the outcome of the "American Section" in THE POETRY REVIEW, assured of its success under your direction.

Miss Morgan's first selection follows:

WATER.

Wonderful water! You are a splendour and a perplexity together . . .
Fluid immortal made common for the use of man.
I see you spurting white and slender from the faucet in my kitchen;
I hear you sharp and sudden at my window,
Your needles broken against the resisting glass.
I see you driving through the roads and pavements,
While dust lies down in reverence before you.
I find you hoarded in the cups of morning glories;
You are quicksilver on the puckered green of maple leaves,
Fresh and delightful after storm.

I see you bearing up the graceful bodies of strong swimmers,
Yet in that hour you drown a hundred men at sea.
You span with loveliness the tall doorway of Heaven,
Holding suspended the passion of the sun.
I find you flashing from a million coronets
Within the sublime democracy of the meadow.
Water, you are a marvel of the Creator's genius—
My eyes would measure and behold your beauty!

Oh, you are slim and sinuous,
You are seductive, water—you are very fair,
Curling your happy way across the continent,
Leaping all barriers with laughing courage,
Shaking your tresses out upon the rocky hillside,
Fringing a beaded robe to hide your nakedness. . . .
You are a woman, water—
One whose entrancing ways my heart should understand.

Nay, you are more than woman—you are Niagara,
Urging your steeds to goals of danger and despair.
I see their white manes flowing down the mountain fastnesses,
I hear the trampling of their hoofs, their thunder;

I see them pitiless upon the frantic ocean,
Where giant ships like petals are whirling in the gale.
O, you are mighty in your majesty and strength, water!
You are a devastation and a sustenance in one.

Unconquered, you are a devil, you are a wanton,
Tamed and adored, you are a necklace round the throat of Nature,
You are Niagara, chained and attentive to the work of man.
How can you be so huge a thing and yet so tiny?
How can you be so black and terrible upon the ocean,
Yet tremble like a teardrop on the rose within my hand?

It is hard to resist the temptation to quote from all of Miss Morgan's selections, just as it is hard to keep from quoting from her other volumes, *Hail Man*, *Forward March*, *The Hour Has Struck*, *God Prays*, and the other interesting works, but lack of space forbids.

* * *

John Hall Wheelock, the author of *The Human Fantasy*, *The Beloved Adventure*, *Love and Liberation*, *Dust and Light*, and, lastly, *The Black Panther*, takes us in his confidence in expressing his selections:

I am sorry that I have not at present any unpublished poem on hand, not already promised, that I consider good enough to submit to The Poetry Review. I should not care to be represented by anything but my best in that magazine. I have written practically nothing the last two years, and as I have been selling such manuscripts as were not already included in my books, you will see that I would naturally have little available at present. However, you may be sure that I will keep The Poetry Review in mind for the first new poem of mine that seems at all worth while.

It is a pleasure to tell you which of my poems I care the most for personally. They are, I think (in *Dust and Light*): *Earth*, page 5; *Storm and Sun*, page 13; *The Moonlight Sonata*, page 22; *Golden Noon*, page 33; *Departure*, page 38; poem on page 56, number XIV; poem on page 130, number II; poem on page 133, number IV; poem on page 146, number XVI; poem on page 149, number XVIII; poem on page 150, number XIX; *The Self*, page 157; *Zenith*, page 160; *Exile from God*, page 175; *Vanished*, page 176; (in *The Black Panther*): The title poem, page 3; *Night Has its Fear*, page 7; *Vaudeville*, page 16; *The Secret One*, page 22; *Haunted Earth*, page 32; *Plaint*, page 38; *Sea Horizons*, page 48; *Of Day*

Came Night, page 51 ; *The Fish Hawk* page 55 ; *My Lonely One*, page 58 ; *Anne*, page 73 ; *The Divine Fantasy*, page 83 ; *The Lion House*, page 97.

Following are the first, second and last verses from *Dust and Light* (Scribner's) :

EARTH.

Grasshopper, your fairy song
And my poem alike belong
To the dark and silent earth
From which all poetry has birth ;
All we say and all we sing
Is but as the murmuring
Of that drowsy heart of hers
When from her deep dream she stirs :
If we sorrow, or rejoice,
You and I are but her voice.

Deftly does the dust express
In mind her hidden loveliness,
And from her cool silence stream
The cricket's cry and Dante's dream ;
For the earth that breeds the trees
Breeds cities too, and symphonies.
Equally her beauty flows
Into a savior, or a rose—
Looks down in dream, and from above
Smiles at herself in Jesus' love.
Christ's love and Homer's art
Are but the workings of her heart ;
Through Leonardo's hand she seeks
Herself, and through Beethoven speaks
In holy thunderings around
The awful message of the ground.

* * *

Yea, and this, my poem, too,
Is part of her as dust and dew,
Wherein herself she doth declare
Through my lips, and say her prayer.

Mr. Wheelock's first preference in *Black Panther* portrays the title of the book :

There is a panther caged within my breast ;
  But what his name, there is no breast shall know
  Save mine, nor what it is that drives him so,
Backward and forward, in relentless quest—
That silent rage, baffled but unsuppressed,
  The soft pad of those stealthy feet that go
  Over my body's prison to and fro,
Trying the walls for ever without rest.

All day I feed him with my living heart ;
  But when the night puts forth her dreams and stars,
    The inexorable Frenzy reawakes :
  His wrath is hurled upon the trembling bars,
The eternal passion stretches me apart,
    And I lie silent—but my body shakes.

* * *

Miss Jeanne Robert Foster, who finds relief in poetry from her editorial work on the *Review of Reviews*, in quoting her selection, expresses her wish to offer a fifty dollar prize, as follows :

I was delighted to receive your letter of the 26th. Let me congratulate you on your plans for American poetry, and wish you all success with your American Section of The Poetry Review.

My favourite poem of all those included in *Rockflower* is . . . the sonnet *Reincarnation*, which in my manuscript bore the title *To a Poet*. . . . A second choice, I suggest *Sound of Autumn* or *Rain*, or the *Poems for Japanese Prints*. The last poem or series of short poems won one of the prizes at a contest of the Penwoman's League.

* * *

Your prize for a sonnet on the Sea is exactly what I would have wished to give. There are too few poems on the sea in books of modern verse. I hope your generosity will bring you all the treasure-trove of the green billows.

If you wish me to do so, I will add an extra prize of fifty dollars to your American Section of The Poetry Review, in 1924, for some other subject, or particular type of poem you may select. With earnest congratulations.

Having been given the privilege of chosing, I have selected *Sound of Autumn* from the *Patterned Cloth* series, and *A Pair of Lovers* from the *Verses for Japanese Prints :*

SOUND OF AUTUMN.

Rest ! for my heart is quieted at last.
Since with love's breath it may no longer beat,
Nor any rhythm of your own repeat,
It lies like a bright pebble that is cast
Into a pool and sees the days go past,
Uncaring whether Time be slow or fleet ;
Hearing the muffled sound of Sorrow's feet
Treading the skies, illimitable, vast.

Now Beauty's outworn strays are set above
The quick devouring passion that was love :
Petals of lilies that the wind has sown,
Ruined gold leaves falling from sapless boughs,
Dead curls of ivy over a still house—
Rest ! For my heart is quiet as your own.

A PAIR OF LOVERS.

MORONOBO.

I shall be shapen
Out of the dust of your heart
At the Last Day.
The resurrection will be
Finding myself yours again.

The wide discussion aroused by *Roast Leviathan* lends special interest to the following letter from its distinguished author, Louis Untermeyer :

I have been out of the city, and so answer your letter—somewhat tardily—through no wilful neglect.

It is good of you to be so interested in *Roast Leviathan* (which, by the by, I considered by far the best of my books, and which is to be published in England by Jonathan Cape), and I appreciate what you write concerning it.

Of the longer poems, my particular favourite is either *Lost Jerusalem* or *Monolog from a Mattress*, the latter being an attempt to synthesize the peculiar blend of sentimental lyricism and ironic philosophy characteristic of Heine.

Of the shorter poems, I am inclined to agree with my former "enemy," John Gould Fletcher, who, in the current issue of *The Freeman*, selects both *Five Trees* and *The Flaming Circle* for especial

praise. And if you don't care for *Waters of Babylon*—a more "private" poem, my poet-wife, Jean Starr Untermeyer, will be devastated.

I wish I had an unpublished poem on hand to send you. Unfortunately, what little I have written lately has been disposed of—but should anything worthy get itself written in the near future I will be glad to submit it.

Lost Jerusalem covers seven printed pages, and as we survey what our sense of poetic justice tells us we should do to really make a thorough review of Mr. Untermeyer's last book, we realise that, with the necessary quotations from his former books, *Challenge*, *The New Adam*, *Including Horace*, *Heavens*, and other works that should be quoted by way of comparison, it would demand all of twenty pages—and, again, space forbids.

Lost Jerusalem, Mr. Untermeyer's selection, is a poignant epic. Starting with :

> I bought my paper at the crowded corner
> And almost shouted as I read the news :
> "Jerusalem Taken—Freedom for the Jews."
> Here was a line to answer friend and scorner !
> A triumph for the just ; a proof that Time,
> So negligent of the affairs of men,
> Had turned and given us our own at last.
> And then
> He stumbled past—
> A cross between a monarch and a mourner.
> Dark-eyed and dismal, but with a sublime
> Assurance in his face.
> A pride of race
> Endowed him with an insolent sort of grace ;
> Something at once rebellious and resigned ;
> A dignity that shamed the yoke ;
> A warmth that called and clasped me to my kind.
> And then he spoke :
>
> What should we want with Zion now, we Jews
> With iron in our souls, with brain and thews
> Hardened by hammering epochs : We who made
> Thundering dictates that have swayed
> And outlived conquering empires : We

In whom a fresh and fiery energy
Has blossomed into psalms and saviours, turned
A savage tribe to kings and priests that burned
To set a whole world free.

From that time on we are reading the Old Testament brought to date by an analytical, sympathetic mind.

Following his fine, swinging lines, we are made to vision the vicissitudes of the Jewish race, and we read :

So we have flourished, fed on dreams and doubt,
God-makers and god-breakers, lashing out
With Job-like questioning at God and death
And answering ourselves in that same breath.

* * *

A race that burns, on every fiery sword,
To rescue tolerance and set freedom free.
This is our mission, let us never cast
Away our boldness which hath great reward. . . .

Into the world then, let us bear this light,
Nor skulk back home with it, but swing the bright
Brand into musty corners. Let the flame
Beat on all smug deceit and placid shame.

Skilfully Mr. Untermeyer brings you back again to the street and out of the story :

He stopped.
The grey dusk dropped its thin disguise
A moment only, and the crowd surged on.
A newsboy shrieked the news again and hopped
Between us as I sought the old man's eyes
That seemed so wise, benevolent and wan ;
Less of a mystery than a shining clue.
I turned to ask something I think I knew
But never can be sure of.
He was gone.

Dr. Percy Stickney Grant, Rector of the Church of the Ascension, of New York, writes :

* * *

I think the poem that gives its names to the book—*A Fifth Avenue Parade*—is very worth while. . . . *The Alter Rail* and *Our Looms*

(page 152 and 153) are not bad; and *The Snow Storm* (page 165) I rather like, as well as *November* (page 119), and *The Search* (page 92).

Scanning the *Fifth Avenue Parade* from his Rectory window, he asks as a stranger on the sidewalk to the policeman at the curb:

What is this silent, dark crowd
Moving in fours,
Reaching so far up the road?
Poor folk they seem—
Undersized, pale and sad.

Policeman:
"Marching to the graves
Of a bunch of young working girls
Burned near here,
Seven score or more,
A factory fire."

A woman on the sidewalk to the stranger:
"My Lizzie works in a loft,
Reached by a wooden stair,
Soaking with oil till it sweats.
Sometime she, too, will burn,
When comes her fire-trap turn.
God help us!"

It is a distressing picture he has seen, and he deals with it sternly:

Why don't you give human beings,
Born miraculously into the light of day,
More of the joy of their birth?
Joy of the sun, seen in heaven;
Joy of the earth, sweet in odour;
Joy of the terrible waters of lakes, river and ocean;
Joy of knowledge;
Joy of strength and mastery;
Joy of laughter and song;
Joy of loving kindness
And of reciprocal affection.

Mrs. Lilla Cabot Perry, the noted Boston poet, leaves to me to select from eight, as follows:

I think I like the following poems as well as any in the *Jar of Dreams*, but as to which one of them you or your readers would care for the most I naturally cannot say, and I should like to leave that matter to be decided entirely by your own taste and judgment.

A Friend	*A Visit*
A Lover	*The Past that Never Dies*
The Cup	*The Char Woman*
No More Dreams	*An August Day*

I should be very glad to be represented in the pages of THE POETRY REVIEW, and I enclose two or three recent poems, begging you to select the one you think most likely to prove acceptable. I have subscribed to THE POETRY REVIEW ever since I first ran across it, and have always considered it the best and most interesting of all the English and American poetry magazines, and I am delighted to hear that it is to have an American Section under your able direction.

While I prefer *A Lover* and *No More Dreams*, I am quoting the first poem mentioned :

In what dark corners of the human mind
Does terror lurk, and formless misery,
Such as I fear to face and look upon
And drag out to the staring light of day ?
Now when veiled Horror crouches at my back
And all my questioning heart trembling recoils,
One hand I seek to draw me towards the light,
'Tis yours, 'tis yours.

I ask not if you love me ; all I know
Is that I'm frightened, cold and comfortless,
And, prosperous friends of other days forgot,
I turn to you, who have known pain and fear
And failure and despair, and in your eyes,
I read companionship, and though your cloak
Be threadbare, half of it is mine,
You are my friend.

Arthur Crew Inman, author of *Red Autumn* and *Bubbles of Gold*, whose characteristic and powerful *New York* appeared in the July POETRY REVIEW, writes in part :

I think the idea of having an American Section to THE POETRY REVIEW an excellent one.

I am more than pleased that you are going to review my book, *Bubbles of Gold*. It seems to have met with quite a success every-

where, and I have received many most complimentary letters and reviews.

You ask me which poem in the book I like the best. I think *You Shall Remember* is the one.

This summer, if everything goes well, I intend to work for almost three months on an opera to be called *Bubbles of Gold*, which will embody many of the poems in the book.

Mr. Inman's selection follows :

Chance and change,
And the broken magic of propinquity,
Have seen us go our separate ways,
Never, perchance, to meet again.

But this I know—
Whenever the autumn wind
Escapes the summer's arms
To swing with rampant joy
Across the waiting land ;
Whenever the autumn leaves
Emblazon the hills with vivid tapestry
Of red, and green, and gold ;
Whenever the autumn sea
Seems as a mesh of living argent fire
Clear to the largest moon—
You shall remember me,
Remember,
And sigh for the days that have been—
Even as I !

From the North-west of the U.S., Portland, Oregon, Miss Grace E. Hall writes :

* * *

I am at a loss to select any that could really classify under the name of favourites. Of those in the volume, *Homespun*, perhaps *Farewell* and *Loneliness*, come as near being favourites with me as any. *I Never Knew* and *When I Shall Die* are also near favourites. The latter has been, by many critics here in the West, declared my very best work. I do not know as to that. It has been much praised by my readers. One critic said *The Mountains* was a flawless piece of work and " real poetry." It seems to me you are better qualified to select my best work, in the book, than anyone else, and I am entirely willing that such choice should rest with you.

* * *

Miss Hall's favourite poem follows :

FAREWELL.

The Spring shall come again and yet again,
With all its witchery of bud and bloom,
Its madrigals of song, its mist of rain,
Its dank sweet odours in the woodland gloom ;
Its wondrous tender love-notes in the dawn,
When feathered wings first cleave the waiting air,
But I shall wake to know that you are gone—
And hear but sounds of mourning everywhere.

The flowers shall yield their fragrance and their grace,
And luscious be the clusters on the vine,
But I shall feel your blown hair on my face,
Your tears upon my hands, like sacred wine ;
When Autumn once again its magic weaves
In colours rivalling the Orient's art,
I'll hear a wordless threnody of leaves,
And sounds of sobbing deep within my heart.

Hazel Hall also writes from Portland, Oregon, as follows :

It is a little difficult for me to say which among the collection is my favourite poem, for I find my parental preferences fluctuate. Still, I think I may say that *They Who Walk in the Moonlight* is about the biggest thing in the book.

I want to send you a poem for THE POETRY REVIEW, but I must go through some of my things before I make the selection, so am not able to enclose it with this. You may expect to hear from me later about that.

They Who Walk in the Moonlight follows in full :

Walk softly through the moonlight,
Softly, lest the sound
Startle the silver on your ankle
And strew it ash-like on the ground.

If you have burning in you
A tinge of thought more bright
Than is the moonlight's sulphur colour,
Do not walk to-night.

They walk best in moonlight
Who borrow for their own
The passion of the moon to keep them
Impersonal as stone.

They who walk in moonlight
Should be so drunk with death
They pour themselves out in libation,
Breath on radiant breath.

* * *

OREGON LIFTS A GLASS TO HER POETS.

Portland, Oregon, is one of the most active poetry centres in the United States. Under the able leadership of the energetic Miss Anne Shannon Monroe, president of the Oregon Writers' League, a movement was started which resulted in Governor Pierce issuing two proclamations, one naming Edwin Markham, native son, official poet laureate of Oregon, the other designating November 28 to December 4 as Oregon Authors' Week; and a Poet's Corner has been established at Portland, where the poetry lovers gather to enjoy interchange of ideas on their favourite subject. I am indebted to Miss Monroe for the following exquisite pen picture of how the poetry movement started and progressed in Oregon:

Long and long ago beauty came to Oregon—in white peaks, in rushing rivers, in verdure as of the tropics . . . it's a green land with a soft sky, and birds sing everywhere . . . then people came—not gold hunters, not fortune seekers—but home lovers, fireside builders. . . . And they made new firesides all down the grassy valleys, and put their few loved volumes on the mantel in easy reach of the children . . . and out of this wedding of the fireside with beauty, dreamers came—Poets. . . . Sam L. Simpson rose as a mountain peak among them, and sang his lovely songs, and went on . . . and Joaquin Miller rose as another mountain peak and sang his lovely songs, and went on . . . and Edwin Markham, with his shout reaching down the ages, rose as another mountain peak . . . and then came along other sweet singers, Ella Higginson, and Opal Whiteley, and Mary Carolyn Davies, and Hazel Hall, and Anthony Euwer, and Grace Robinson Ross, and Mabel Holmes Parsons, and Grace E. Hall, and Ben Hur Lampman, and Dean Collins, and many, many more. . . .

The poets' corner in the great J. K. Gill bookstore is the home town's lifted glass to its literary geniuses . . . these shall not pass, says the Corner, without our knowledge, without knowledge of our love and good will . . . there shall be no far-off day of Oregon's resurrecting and honouring her forgotten dead. . . . *Now* shall the flowers be placed in striving hands, *now* shall the laurel crown knitted brows. . . .

A huge stone fire place, representative of the type built by the early pioneers—above it, as in pioneer homes, the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, Shakespeare, and the dictionary—centres the corner. Then there are comfortable chairs, fireside nooks, and everywhere, books. . . . Here, poets, prose writers, and lovers of literature are invited to stop and sit and browse a bit. . . .

* * *

The poetry world is indebted to the Peterborough Colony—and the muses who are said to be especially inspiring in the rustic New Hampshire scenery and air—for many masterpieces. *The Peterborough Anthology*, compiled by Jean Wright Gorman and Herbert S. Gorman (Theatre Arts Inc., publishers), gives a selection of poems from poets who have resided at the Peterborough Colony, including Edwin Arlington Robinson, Josephine Preston Peabody, Alan Segar, Padraic Culum, William Rose Benet, John Bennett, Elenor Wyle, Maxell Bodenhein, Hervey Allen, Barbette Deutsch, Herman Hagerdon, Ridgely Foorence, Herbert S. Gorman, Charles W. Stork, Jules Bois, Theodore Maynard, Gold Ridge, Margaret Widdemer and Du Bose Hayward. We hope at some future time to give a "close up" pen picture of the Peterborough poets.

CYRANO'S SONG

A ROSE leans from the wall,
Late rose, gold rose,
Watching the dead leaves fall—
Day's close, year's close.

Tranquil, unspent, my heart
Awaits your claiming,
Through life's long fighting day
To sunset's flaming.

C. MORISON.

SOME CANADIAN POETS.

Spun-Yarn and Spindrift. Norah M. Holland. (J. M. Dent and E. P. Dutton.)
The Poetical Works of Wilfred Campbell. (Hodder and Stoughton.)
The Mad Minstrel. Robert Watson. (Fisher Unwin.)
The Song of Israfel. Marian Osborne. (Erskine Macdonald, Ltd.)
Gabriel Lajeunesse. W. King Baker. (George Routledge.)

IN a volume of poetry by Norah M. Holland, who has been termed "Canada's leading woman-poet," one is surprised to discover how much there is in it of Ireland and how little of Canada. This should tend to prove that it is not in Nature alone that a poet's inspiration lies, but in humanity, and the history of human endeavours, failures and tragedies. In spite of the assertion that Miss Norah Holland is "one of the leading woman-poets of Canada," the volume of *Spun-Yarn and Spindrift* holds a promise, but not an entire fulfilment, of the higher flights of poetry. The poems dealing with Ireland are full of delicate and mystic fancies, and *A Sparrow in Church* is a very tender little poem and the work of an artist. Great praise has been given to *The Little Dog-Angel*, but it is not a poem of the highest order by any means; its charm lies in its appeal to dog lovers, just as some hymns pass for poetry because they satisfy a religious yearning. *Remittance Men* is stronger work, but hauntingly reminiscent of Rudyard Kipling. There pervades, indeed, an echo in many of the poems; the lilt and manner of Newbolt run through *Captains Adventurous* and *Newbury Town. The Wife from the Sea* has the same theme as Matthew Arnold's *Forsaken Merman*, but without his dream-like witchery. In the poem published in the September number of THE POETRY REVIEW Miss Norah Holland echoes in *I Spoke to God* Francis Thompson's concluding lines of *The Hound of Heaven;* now, although two poets may allowably write on the same subject, is it worth while putting into verse what has already been so incomparably said? The critic, Krino, on Canadian Poetry, gives as his opinion that "the main trouble with Canadian writers is that they possess no power of self-criticism. They appear to be utterly unconscious of when they are doing good work and when bad." This is a severe charge, but is substantiated by the poems. There is in *Joan the Maid* a very execrable fourth line, "Gather around her as she on doth ride," a line that is poison to the tongue and a horror to the ear. Severe self-criticism would eliminate these defects. The extracts from a sacred cantata are musical and simple, but words especially strung to be submitted to music can never quite evidence the strength and originality that are the sinews of the poem proper. Stronger and more sustained flights should be looked for from Miss Norah M. Holland.

Another Canadian poet, Wilfred Campbell, felt his soul stirred by every aspect of Nature, and he wrote with insight and freshness of these varying aspects, although he allowed an impossible word (poetically), " dumber," to remain and spoil a line, or so prosaic-footed lines as " Miles and miles of lake and forest, Miles and miles of sky and mist," thereby reducing his vision to a foot-weary pedestrianism. Sky and mist cannot be put into road measurement. But the mass of the poems are sincere and full of the love of Earth in all her manifestations. The later ones deal more with the riddles and perplexities of life, with almost passionate returns to the healing balms of lakes and woods and the solitudes of Nature. *The Vanguard* is a trumpet song of high endeavour, and there are too many fine and dignified poems to quote by name ; the patriotic ones are clear and manly, but did ever poet yet, save Shakespeare, write immortal patriotic verse ?

Wilfred Campbell was of that brotherhood of poets to whom vision meant a " secret kinship " " in bud and leaf, in wind and wave." He could not exalt the gutter ; his music was as clear and clean as the wind-swept waters of his loved Lake Huron. One feels that if he had lived in an older country, surrounded by virile poets and stern critics, he would have attained to greater happiness and power in his gift.

Of Robert Watson's work in *The Mad Minstrel* there is but little that can be said. The " story-telling verse " recalls Bret Harte, and Bret Harte was only a poet when he wrote prose, but in prose a veritable poet. Except in *Poppies* and *To Sleep* the poet seems absent in these rhymes of a " Mad Minstrel." It may well be that *The Pluck of Barney Binge* will appeal to some minds, or be rolled out at a Penny Reading with rollicking effect ; but the high gods on Mount Olympus will not recognise it as poetry.

One of the American humorists relates how he went into a store, desirous of purchasing a pair of blue slippers. He was immediately shown cunningly made trouser-stretchers, complete dressing cases, safety razors, and every conceivable article save and except blue slippers. After vigorous expostulations the store-keeper admitted that he did not stock blue slippers. *Gabriel Lajeunesse*, by W. King Baker, may be historically correct ; it points in a praiseworthy fashion to a blot on the English administration in the violent dispersion of the Acadians of Grand Pré ; it is full of excellent sentiments—but it is not poetry.

Various eulogies are appended to this volume on former works by the author ; one on *The Quaker Warrior* runs thus : " The book has

much interesting information on Quaker habits and life." But we are not asking for information; we are demanding poetry. In *Gabriel Lajeunesse* we have failed to find even ten lines of poetry. Take the following:

> " ' Dreams go by contraries,' I said long ago;
> Thus the pale-face oft finds them; let it be so:
> Thy love for the pale-face, seen only in dream,
> Given one of thy people, rich blessing to him,
> Will bring rest to the spirit, will answer blood call,
> Though traces of Cymric blood may thy veins fill."

This can, under no conditions, be termed poetry; it hardly seems sense. Here is another specimen. The heroine, Evangeline, is " leaning from the casement " and apostrophising the meadows.

> " My father is astir; I will hasten and prepare
> For him, left lonely and bereft of home's chief light and joy,
> My saintly, blessed, but all too frail fond mother:
> She who was to him what I to Gabriel hope to be,
> Nay, what I am and ever must be to him."

The " Nay " is delicious; we had almost written " neigh." And the adjective " frail "—" all too frail " cannot be called happy; it raises the eyebrows of rude interrogation concerning the young woman's mother! We feel, moreover, that after soliloquising the innocent meadows Evangeline is going to bore us horribly. The coloured illustration of a hairdresser-looking man solemnly paddling a canoe over an amazingly coloured river does not add to the attraction of the story told in lines. How often must it be reiterated that prose cut into eight or ten syllabled lines does not become poetry any more than easily rhymed verse, without inner vision, can correctly be called the output of the same high muse?

Marian Osborne, in *The Song of Israfel*, proves herself to be a poet. Yet she has, perhaps, been snared by the belief that to use poetic figures is the same thing as inspiration. There is far too frequent a repetition of a current vice of poetastry—of " pink-tipped," " rose-tipped," " rose-transparent," " crimson-tipped." Even if an admiring circle of friends applauds these dawn or evening descriptions, she would do well to rigorously abstain from them and from such catch phrases as " the nude moon " and the " naked moon "; some new poet, wishing to be original, will be raving about the " well-dressed moon " before long! On the other hand, there are four lines in *Dawn* which are entirely poetic and, without conveying any particular information, are as beautiful as a Venetian vase:

"Bare-foot we ran, 'neath my cloak of jade velvet
Lined with down feathers and broidered in pearl,
Drinking night's tears from the cups of each floweret,
Watching the morn her brave ensigns unfurl."

Here Imagination holds her kingdom.

To the mere Englishman a poem dedicated to "Sir Andrew MacPhail" and commencing

"God of the open air, I cry to thee,"

causes some perplexity; the prosaic dedication raises a smile, which is to be regretted, because the lines are forceful and sonorous, although, perhaps, there is too pronounced an echo in

"The birds in choir thrill forth love's symphony."

The *Forest of Mine* is also thoughtful, and has some fine images. Here, again, we are surprised by the dedication, unless, indeed, "Elizabeth Knowles" is a Dryad!

The War Gods is a vigorous and virile poem, a quick-marching indictment of war; it is marred by one or two careless or rather ignoble lines, a fault that the ear of the author should surely be able to remedy. Another delicate and charming piece of work is *White Violet*; lines such as these are worth all the invocations to love and its sighs and tears and ecstasies. Of the sonnets, *Ailes d'Or* is the most musical and truest to the casket-like form of the true sonnet.

ARTHUR HOOD.

A GREAT AMORIST.

IN the third of his *Epistles from Bath*, a letter dealing with the literary amenities of that city, "Q. in the Corner"—*alias* Thos. Haynes Bayley—reproaches the fine folk who frequent the same library, because, whereas

"Intellectual joys are undoubtedly felt
When gazing on vellum, morocco and gilt;
In a volume in boards no attractions are found—
Verse only can charm when 'tis charmingly bound."

The reproach is not unchallengeable: even the most authentic lovers of poetry and literature may be susceptible to the positive and negative influences of *format*. Impecunious youth will at a pinch slake its thirst for some masterpiece even in a draper's edition; but a

vintage worthy of Venetian glass cannot be duly savoured out of a cracked teacup.

Thanks are therefore due to the editor and publishers of the *Love Poems of John Donne*,* issued at moderate price in a form which cannot but enhance the pleasure of reading them. In order to give "a typographical flavour of Donne's own day," the poems have been printed on Vidalon hand-made paper in the unique seventeenth century Fell types. The frontispiece is a collotype reproduction of a contemporary portrait of Donne, at the age of 43; the binding is quarter-parchment with Italian decorated paper sides and end-papers. The issue being limited to 1,250 copies, this book, believed to be the first printed in italics, is likely to prove a good investment.

Thus much in regard to form; let us turn now to the substance. The book is, of course, a selection from the complete works, the principle of choice being psychological rather than purely æsthetic. The editor's idea being to limit the scope of the volume to Donne's subjective poetry, the verse-letters and epithalamions are excluded as "made to order after the fashion of his time." The chosen pieces are given in a sequence roughly to be described as follows: Ecstatic love; wooing; won (going to bed, sleeping, waking); parting; tokens; sickness and death; *aigre-down*; anti-love and Don Juan; misogyny and love-weariness; and so to two poems of Divine love. The volume consists mainly of about four-fifths of the lyrics and half of the elegies. Some of the omissions—*The Triple Fool*, *The Primrose*, *Soul's joy*, *now I am gone*, for example—are surprising, in view of the title. "Written to order," as applied to the poems comprised in the "Anatomy" or to the best verse-letters, demands qualification, since both abound in passages of unfettered imagination. Having recently dealt at some length with Donne's genius,† I have to a great extent reviewed this book in advance. It is to be welcomed, not as a substitute for the complete works, but as a spiritual record, intimately revealing. It will be enjoyed best by those who, while tracing through its comely pages the fiery core of Donne's *élan vital*, have as background the consciousness of his personality in its wider aspects and of his work as a whole.

CHARLES WHITBY.

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* *Love Poems of John Donne*, with some account of his life taken from the writings in 1639 of Izaak Walton. (Soho. 1923. The Nonsuch Press. 10s. 6d. net).

† The Poetry Review, March-April, 1923.

IN SARDONIC VEIN.

THERE is a measure of truth in the statement that there is in Art no such thing as progress: for what epic poet has equalled Homer, or what tragedian surpassed Æschylus? But it is to be observed that there is, and must be, in Art, if not progress, at any rate development. Thus the *joie de vivre* of the Elizabethans was superseded by the other-worldliness of the Carolians and Jacobeans; and that by the cool common sense of the eighteenth-century school; to be ousted in its turn by the wave of romanticism initiated by Byron, Keats and Shelley. When this was in process of disintegration into exotic sentimentality a school of young writers raised the banner of revolt, and broke away in various directions from the approved themes and methods of their immediate predecessors.

Among these innovators and experimentalists the Sitwells and their collaborators in the *Wheels* anthologies were perhaps the most successful in intriguing the curiosity of connoisseurs. Mr. Osbert Sitwell now follows Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell and Miss Edith Sitwell with a book (*Out of the Flame*, Grant Richards, 6s. net) in which he challenges attention on his own account. There is at any rate a "family likeness" between the work of the two brothers, but Osbert's is less obscure, less "poetic," and more impregnated with "moralic acid." He has, it would seem, a good many grievances against Society, and a knack of giving them grimly humorous, sometimes even savage expression. I have no prejudice against satire, if it is good, as Mr. Sitwell's frequently is; but I prefer poetry; and Osbert gives that too, although reserving in his most serious or exalted mood the privilege of sporadic sly thrusts at the Philistines. Thus in the really beautiful *Rocking Horse*, while describing the scenes remote in time or space to which it carries the children he is rocking, he breaks off his description of a coral island and its dusty denizens to indulge in his gibe at

> "the missionary who wishes
> To make them chant a British hymn
> And hide their nakedness from fishes."

The same Puck-like humour sometimes manifests itself by the sudden interpolation in a sedately serious context of a jarring colloquialism, as when in a poem descriptive of the postprandial somnolence of a sun-steeped cathedral city we read how

> "The swans who float
> —Wings whiter than the foam of sea—
> Up the episcopal smooth moat
> Uncurl their wings to ring for tea."

But this, after all, is a revolutionary procedure only to those whose acquaintance with poetry is either limited to the decorous products of Tennyson and his Victorian fellows or who have forgotten Byron, to say nothing of Donne—or Browning. The fact that Mr. Osbert Sitwell is not too æsthetically aloof to betray an impassioned interest in matters political, social, religious—or, in a word, broadly human—is all to the good, in view of a notable tendency on the part of modern reviewers to restrict the field of poetry more and more to the purely lyrical vein. Any poet who displays catholicity or an expansive impulse is in these days pooh-poohed as a "rhetorician" or a propagandist. This narrow and effeminate view of the poetic function would fain exclude such giants as Dryden and (*a fortiori*) Pope from any claim to the laurel: a gentleman writes to the *Sunday Times* quite recently a fervid protest against those charlatans Matthew Arnold and Wordsworth! C. J. W.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: PERSONALITY IN POETRY AND CRITICISM: DANTE: ORIGINALITY IN ANTHOLOGIES

WE could fill this issue with notes on the delightful books that reach us and await the attention of specially qualified reviewers. The autumn leaves are not dry leaves but are full of vitality as well as colour. A most casual acquaintance with them deepens one's appreciation of life. Slim volumes of verse—"slim" is literal as well as hackneyed, but is not deprecatory: we welcome the slimness, and while not judging quality by bulk, we are more inclined to examine and grow enthusiastic over a small collection than to pay attention to a formidable volume through which we may have to wade painfully if we venture into its portentous depths at all—contain "infinite riches in a little room." In a few pages Stephen Gwynn offers his *Collected Poems* (Blackwood, 6s. net), which are the essence of a lifetime of culture, experience and meditation. The heart of a gallant Irishman is in the lyrical version of the *Woman of Beare* and a *Lay of Ossian*:

"Patrick is dead and Ossian;
Gull to his place is gone;
But the words and the deeds of heroes
Linger in twilight on;
In a twilight of fireside tellings
Lit by the poet's lay,
Lighting the gloom of hardship,
The night of a needy day."

and all the struggles, hopes and achievements of the most idealistic nation are concentrated in the songs of *Defeat* (1902) and *Victory* (1923). *An Inscription for a Monument* is as terse and restrained as Simonides' famous epitaph, and there are other verses that reveal the tastes and emotions of a gallant Irishman. Personality again lends fascination to Lady Margaret Sackville's delicate *Poems* (Allen and Unwin, 5s.), in which are many epitaphs that might have come fresh from the Greek Anthology. Particularly interesting and personal, too, is the single volume of the late W. S. Blunt's *Poems*, with its wealth of sonnets (*Macmillan*, 7s. 6d.). Of Mr. Blunt's poetry we wrote at length recently and need now only commend this large and representative selection.

Another individual volume to be thankful for this autumn is J. D. C. Pellow's *Parentalia* (Milford, 5s.). Apparently a " Georgian," Mr. Pellow nevertheless is free from the meretricious vices and feeble puerilities generally associated with that term. Even when most personal he is never footling, his irony is spacious and not paltry, he does not torture language or the ear and has imagination and reverence. He knows the world is still prone " to watch the bloody-minded take Their pleasure, barbarous and obscene, In mangling a starved Nazarene," and that not yet can we truthfully declare " Vicisti, Galilaee," and we prefer his views on " London Lovers," lovingly and delicately expressed, to those of the Lord Bishop of that wonderful, much-traduced city.

The Continuity of Letters is an excellent title for Mr. John Bailey's new volume of essays (Clarendon Press, 12s. 6d.). This author really does regard literature as being like life, a thing of unbroken continuity, in which every successive birth is that of a creature, old as well as new, even fuller of what it has inherited than of what it inaugurates. Literature to him is neither a musty study of dreary hieroglyphics nor a record of obscenity, but a gracious spirit pervading life and interpretative of the soul of man. And Mr. Bailey is a noble expositor of that spirit and its significance—a sagacious, scholarly writer who wears his culture as a garment and is a gentleman among critics. To read him we gain not only information but education—a rare thing in these days of hasty generalisation and pompous pronouncements and dreary columns of pragmatic judgments in Sunday papers which deliver the literary law with pontifical assurance to a public more critical of motor-cars than of literature.

Mr. Bailey is not averse from originality and experiment in poetry, but he fears " that some of our Georgians and neo-Georgian poets are too entirely set on belonging to one generation, tickling

its prevalent taste for crudity of thought and statement, its revolt against morals and authority, against moderation and the middle way, its desire to make all things new and most things violent in art and life, to give one much confidence that they will hold their own in another generation which will quite certainly react from this." And he goes on to insist on the quality of timelessness in poetry, while in another essay he expounds the Grand Style in the grand manner that is not too aloof to discern poetry in the work of a blacksmith or other unknown and humble folk on whom the spirit of poetry has descended.

It is a natural transition from Mr. Bailey to Andrew Lang, whose *Poetical Works*, edited by Mrs. Lang, have just been published by Longmans in four beautiful volumes that are exquisite examples in every detail of fine book production. This scholarly gentleman sent us singing down the avenues of life; he made us Jacobites in spite of our knowing how faithless and feckless were the Stuarts; he sang brilliantly and fondly of all the world's delight, from Helen to cricket, and as a maker of ballads, parodies, genial satire and topical verse no one to-day comes near him save the Editor of *Punch*. He deepens our joy in life and literature.

When the sexcentenary celebrations made Dante a topical personage we could not find for the use of many inquirers a satisfactory Dante primer. Now we have—and make a whole-hearted if belated recommendation of—a new and thoroughly revised edition of Dr. Edmund G. Gardner's authoritative text on Dante's life and work (London and Toronto, Dent; New York, Dutton)—a compact biography, exposition and bibliography that should be studied and used by all readers to their more adequate appreciation

> "Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,
> Through every paradise and through all glory,
> Love led serene, and who returned to tell
> The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story
> How all things are transfigured except Love."

Somewhat belatedly, too, comes Mary Bradford Whiting's *Dante the Man and the Poet* (Heffer, Cambridge), exquisitely written and illustrated. Miss Whiting, who appeals to the general reader, draws for her connected account of the poet's career on old Italian chroniclers, particularly on his contemporary, the romantic Boccaccio, who was the first public lecturer on the aptly named Durante and was very naturally attracted by the relations of the poet and Bice. Miss Whiting lovingly traces the physical and spiritual pilgrimage of "student, lover, statesman, exile, poet and

seer " in an altogether delightful book which we hope will be used liberally by those to whom books are the best gifts in preference to the partial anthologies of evanescent verse too generally resorted to as a facile solution of a difficulty. Give books, more and more books, but give worthy ones and not merely fashionable perverters of literary taste.

Anthologies, by the way, are not so numerous this autumn, and those that have reached us are more definite and desirable. From America, by way of The Bodley Head, come two entirely fresh and original collections of modern Russian and German poetry, with provocative introductions. In Russia, we are told, " futurism showed no great vitality and would probably have shared the fate of a fashion, were it not for the revolution. Its unabashed iconoclasm, its plebeian exuberance, may account for its recent vogue. . . . It is worth noting that the literature of the revolution is chiefly verse. . . . The crudity and naïveté of the workmen's poetry produced since the revolution is redeemed by a hard-handed grasp on reality. The return to realism is the promise of a new development in Russian poetry." These two Anthologies are invaluable to the serious students of poetry. They are the expression of nations in ferment. Deep significance lies in the statement that in contemporary German poetry " all traditional forms are discarded and only rhythm is retained as the striving, anarchic, inconclusive principle of existence. Hence license with syntax and neologistic word-formation. . . . Generally speaking, much of the new poetry has the cryptic quality of egocentric expression, revelling in idiosyncrasies and careless of communication. . . . The lyric utterance of the present period is necessarily unbeautiful." We will see later and at more leisure how far the examples given in these intriguing volumes bear out these contentions. In *A Miscellany of Current Verse* (Routledge, 3s. 6d.) Mr. Ernest Guy Pertwee offers a companion anthology to his excellent *New Spirit in Verse*, which even more pleasantly illustrates the theme of the latter. It is partial inasmuch as it contains nothing hackneyed, dreary or obscene, and may therefore be taken to represent only a section of the " younger moderns." We are enchanted by several unfamiliar *London Lyrics* by Jean Guthrie Smith, Phyllis James and others, a new *Sussex Song* by Thomas Sharp (whose recently published Macmillan volume has been a great delight to us), the simplest, truest animal poem (by Godfrey Elton) we have seen for a decade, and best of all we find again Commander Hilton Young's inexpressibly beautiful *Christmas* that is worth all the tiresome " mental poetry " spun from bemused neo-Georgian brains. We look forward to hearing these poems spoken up and down the country by the younger generation.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

I HAVE sorted out the verse into three classes, and now turn to the smallest of my haystacks to hunt the prizewinners. Here is Hugh Montgomerie's *At a Ruined Shrine*, spoilt by the last line, "Your dreams will come back to you." (Do competitors read these lines, I wonder, or is it that they do not know the meaning of the word *cliché* ?) Here are three poems by Dorothy Ball by which I have been greatly impressed. The blemishes are insertions—as of *do* and *did*—before the affirmative verb, and inversions which bear the fingerprint of the clever packer. Here is Violet le Maistre's *Ghost Hunters*, a perfect snapshot of an alarmed awakening, but somewhat slight and unsubstantial. Here is Phœbe Fenwick Gaye's *When I am Old*, spoilt by the sentimentally depreciating use of the word *only*. Nothing could be worse, except perhaps *just a*. And here is F. A. Carter's *Early Spring in a Shovel Works*. If I remember aright I have not read a single poem of Mr. Carter's without real admiration. I call them poems to be fair, my own opinion being that they are rather protests. Readers are familiar with my belief in the "last line climax." Mr. Carter never fails us. His last line is a jeer, an unhappy laugh, or a blinding, searing bitterness. Now I have certain touchstones, and they tell me that this is not poetry. Whatever it is, and it is most certainly something fine, intensely alive and astonishing admirable, it is—they say—not poetry. How far are my personal predilections leading me astray ? Here is Mr. Carter's latest. Judge for yourselves.

EARLY SPRING IN A SHOVEL WORKS.

Half-seen through dirty windows, branches spread,
With buds upon them just awakening.
A week ago, the twigs looked black and dead ;
And now they've heard the promises of Spring.
Outside, a throstle plies his minstrelsy :
—I know he's singing by his quivering throat :
But not for me his song ! Relentlessly,
Machines and clang of hammers drown each note.

Inside, at endless tasks, we swink and sweat
Forcing the stubborn steel with ruthless hammer.
Hardened our hands, our souls grow harder yet
And thoughts of Spring are dead amongst the clamour.
Anemones are whitening the glades,
And we are busy making garden spades.

That would interest the Editor of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, who has recently been conducting a correspondence on Sheffield and Poetry. Well, we pass on. Here are *Between* and *A Dieu*, two short

poems by Joan Warburg. They are faultless and inspired, and much the best she has sent in. Here is *Dream Love* by E. Joyce Harrison, a really delightful lyric. Here is *Sanctuary* by Molly Young, perfect except for a not very noticeable breakdown in the simple rhyme-scheme. Here is Minna Dowson's *St. Luke's Day*, all about a "dear cat that died," and entirely successful. The last two lines are memorable :

O pity them who have not learned to die—
For who can pity thee ?

Of course, it would not appeal to the ribald.

Well, here is John Cook's *Kreisler*, a magnificent thing, but not without flaws in the last nine lines ; and here is Marion Allison's *Pigeons and Peacocks*, which is flawless. Mrs. Winder's three poems are delightful. Bertha Annakin's *A Memory* is poignantly simple and moving. And here, by Jove, are two more by that fellow F. A. Carter. Just read this :

THE HUMANITARIAN.

Fair Sweet-and-Twenty came back from her walk
Shaken and white, her blue eyes horror-filled ;
And incoherently she told me how
She'd passed a farm where pigs were being killed.

Held by the horror of the screams and blood,
She'd watched one tragedy, and now she cried
" It's barbarous ; it shouldn't be allowed ;
It's horrible to slaughter things outside."

Here are Eleanor B. Simeon's *The Clanricaune*, Alberta Vickridge's tour de force *A Bird in the Pear Blossom*, Blanche Jones' *Afterglow* and *To an Old Picture* (the best of her work that I have seen), Audrey Wrangham's faultless and truthful but somewhat disappointing *Poet Out of Love*, M. Whitney's *Silence* and *To a Dead Child*, Cyril G. Taylor's *Unrest*, and—last and loveliest—*Grey Sundown* and *The Willow Grove* by Honor F. Leeke. I await the publication of Miss Leeke's poems with angry impatience, but am quite in the dark as to whether any steps are being taken in that direction. There is in her work an individual and unique quality which is as rare as it is fascinating. I know of nothing else like it. As a recent prize-winner, she is, however, *hors concours*, and I divide the money prize equally between Alberta Vickridge, Marion Allison, Mrs. Winder (for *The Magi*), and Joan Warburg, with my condolence to each on having the others as fellow-competitors. The six book prizes go to John Cook, Hugh Montgomerie, Violet le Maistre, Phœbe Fenwick Gaye, Cyril G. Taylor and M. Whitney.

O. C. DE C. E.

THE SPOKEN WORD

IN *The Spoken Word* (Methuen, 5s. net) Miss Louie Bagley brings into prominence the important fact (so often ignored in these days) that good speaking, either private or public, is an art, and requires for even a slight degree of attainment towards perfection systematic training, physically, intellectually and emotionally. The breathing for voice is well dealt with, but sufficient attention is not paid to the delicacy and refinement of the kinæsthetic sense for breath-control. This very expert and experienced teacher of diction deals briefly with the formation and production of the vowel and consonant sounds from the point of view of distinctness; but the musical value of the spoken sounds is not explained adequately, nor its importance from the hygienic side emphasised: and it is much to be regretted that she should have adhered to the old and unsatisfactory explanation of the four big diphthongs. We strongly recommend all serious students of voice training, and those whose success in life depends largely on their power of influencing others by means of the spoken word, to study *Eurythm*, the admirable, fascinating and scholarly work of Dr. H. H. Hulbert, the Society's Hon. Technical Adviser (Novello). And it is doubtful if the methods suggested for imparting instruction in regard to rhythm and gesture are advisable. Mechanical aids to the teaching of rhythm have not usually artistic results; the best method is to give young people the opportunity of hearing poetry well read, and their natural aptitude will readily respond to "the dance of words which good ears are pleased with" (Sainsbury): and to teach natural and graceful movements by encouraging dancing and games of skill, etc., and then allow gesture to be the natural individualistic reflex action of intense thought and emotion, for both rhythm and gesture should be subconscious.

We entirely disagree with the analysis of the emotions when taught in definite connection with special passages for recitation or public speaking generally, and feel that Mr. Henry Neville is right when he maintains that "the aspirant must not stop to contemplate his wings, for if he does he will never rise." In striving to develop and express individuality, more stress should be laid on the paramount importance of keeping the author's aims and point of view clearly in view. There are some excellent examples from well-known poets and prose-writers, the careful study and practice of which should greatly aid those who are striving after the art of effective speaking generally, and of poetry in particular.

The scope and significance of Dr. Hulbert's book was indicated by himself in Poetry Society lecture on "The Science and Practice of Eurythmics," printed as an article in the February, 1914, issue of THE POETRY REVIEW. Although his withdrawal from active work

is a great loss to us, his exhaustive manual on the principles of vocal and physical therapy is now available, and will be found of the utmost service to intelligent and earnest teachers and students.

* * *

On the invitation of the Rev. Hugh Chapman, Chaplain of the Poetry Society, a series of Poetry Services-Readings and Addresses directing attention to the Rule of the week in Poetry, will be commenced in the Chapel Royal of the Savoy on Monday, November 5th, and continued on successive Mondays, at 3.15 p.m. (Whether this time is more suitable and convenient than the more desirable hour of noon will be ascertained in the course of this significant development of our programme.) Seats will be reserved for members of the Poetry Society, who should, however, notify the General Secretary of their intention of being present and show their membership cards to the verger at the Chapel Royal. The President hopes to be able to give the first Reading, to be followed by Mr. Alfred Noyes, Mr. A. C. Benson, the Rev. R. L. Gales, the Rev. F. de W. Lushington, and other Poetry Society "missioners."

* * *

"Krino's" survey of Canadian Poetry has aroused a storm that is all for the good of the subject. Canada, Great Britain, the United States, will be better for a clearer conception of Canadian poetry and its relative significance. On one point several readers appear to have made a mis-reading, though it was clearly enough made by the author, who in the preamble said that Canada in its infancy lacked the older establishment of the United States and "the influence of cultured centres like Harvard and Yale." This has been taken as an intentional slur on Canadian universities, which is nonsensical. Had our objectors read the context they would have seen that "Krino," who has been a citizen of the Dominion for 36 years, was referring to the early days of Longfellow and Whittier, before Canada's universities of to-day had come into existence.

* * *

In opening the autumn session the President of the Kensington Centre drew attention to the development of the Society as an incorporated body and quoted with gratification the definition of one of the objects—"to establish an active fellowship with a love of poetry as the common bond of union"—an ideal to be kept in mind and carried into practice. The spirit of the ensuing meeting proved that the sympathetic bond exists in the Kensington Centre.

The opening meeting of the Chelsea Centre was remarkable for a young man's subtle analysis of the weakness of his contemporaries. He was too sturdy to gush about poor stuff that will be as dead as Martin Tupper within its own generation—the literary versecraft that had no substantial *raison d'être* was trivial and trifling without being smart or bright, and was not produced by any compelling emotion. This "mental poetry," the jejune fruit of forced mental effort, oscillated between the crude inventory and the turgid verbose description of fancied emotions. A love poem was no longer a gay and simple thing, but a pathological essay. The writers who called themselves poets and cried each other up in the newspapers were town dwellers absorbed in a succession of little things, without the power of direct observation. They were obsessed by print, and knew not the sound of words but only the look of them. They tilted at windmills they had never seen, flirted with deadly sins they dare not practise, played with faked emotions without any robust passion, and waxed indignant over the use of honourable clichés while repeating each other's jewelled phrases—artificial gems—that were in temporary fashion, the most hardworked and misused words at present being "jade" and "dung," according to whether the practitioners were attached to the romantic or the realistic schools for the time being. If modern "poetry," or what passed as such in the flood of repetitive anthologies, which indicated within what narrow feeble compass poetry reading was confined, had any significance it indicated that our alleged intellectual life was a feeble thing and was too thin and paltry to be the herald of revolution. In many ways a refreshing address, suggesting a belated revolt against the meretricious trappings of modernity.

* * *

The Barnet Centre of the Poetry Society has arranged a varied and fascinating programme for its meetings on fortnightly Fridays, at 8.15 p.m. Mr. Lawrence Binyon opened the session with a lecture on "Traditions and Reactions in Modern Poetry," with the President, Sir Owen Seaman, in the chair. Other lectures and readings are :—

November 9th.—Elizabethan Sonnets and other Poems. Introductory paper, at the Grammar School.

November 23rd.—Elizabethan Songs : Readings and music, at 33, Wood Street.

December 7th.—An Elizabethan Play : *Edward II*, by Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), at "The Orkneys," Manor Road.

December 21st.—Selections from *Drake*, by Alfred Noyes, at 14, Wood Street.

January 4th.—Lecture: "Greek Tragedy," by Miss Dorothy Lattimer, at the Grammar School.

January 18th.—Annual Meeting. Readings from *Poets of Essex*, by Miss Madeline Rock, at "Egloskerry," Granville Road.

February 1st.—A Greek Play: *The Trojan Women*, by Euripides (Gilbert Murray's translation), at the Old Church House.

February 15th.—A Greek Play: *Antigone*, by Sophocles (Prof. Campbell's translation), at 33, Wood Street.

Sir Owen Seaman has kindly presented to the Library a copy of each of his works.—C. E. Strachan, Hon. Secretary.

* * *

The Hampstead Centre autumn session was opened on September 29th by an "At Home," which was largely attended by members and friends. A musical and dramatic programme was carried out by members, assisted by Mr. Parker (violin), Mr. Winckley (vocalist) and Miss Summers (songs at the piano), and Miss Julie Huntsman and Miss Nellie Sargent recited with their usual vivacity.

The following programme has been arranged :—

November 6th.—Special Evening under the direction of Miss F. C. Huntsman, who will read a paper on "The Problem of Shakespeare's Sonnets," with illustrative readings by members.

November 20th.—John Donne.

December 4th.—*The Queen of China*, by Edward Shanks.

December 18th.—Historical Characters.

January 1st.—Motherhood.

The meetings are held at Miss Julie Huntsman's Studios, 150, Finchley Road, N.W.3, commencing at 7.45 p.m. Further information respecting the work of the Centre can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. F. Tilly, 32, Camden Square, N.W.1 (telephone, North 709).

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At a Poetry Recital by holders of the Poetry Society's Silver Medal for distinction in the art of speaking verse, the Lady Margaret Gold Medal was won by Miss Bertha Impey, elocution mistress of Portsmouth Girls' High School; Mr. Bassett Roe awarding the guinea book prize to Miss Ida Bennett (Ilford) as *proxime accessit*, and subsidiary awards to Miss Gladys E. London and Miss Iris Fry (Eastbourne), whom he placed next in order of merit.

OTHER NOTICES ON p. viii.